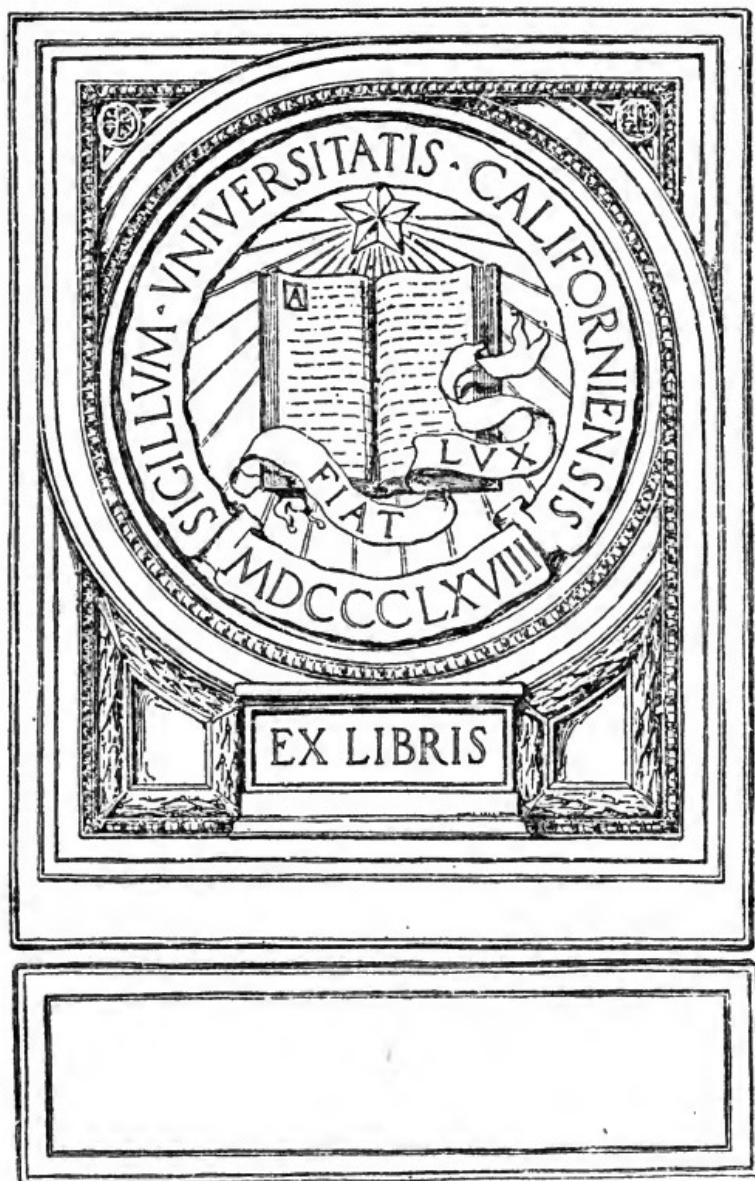


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THE PRINCIPAL FEATURES

OF THE

HISTORY AND LITERATURE

OF

POLAND.

BY

N. F. ZABA.

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TO THE MOST NOBLE
THE MARQUIS OF BREADALBANE,
PRESIDENT OF THE
LITERARY ASSOCIATION OF THE FRIENDS OF POLAND.

MY LORD,

The memory of every Pole cannot but cling with the warmest attachment to the broken shadow of the departed Friend of the cause of their country, whose love of justice, humanity, and freedom, gave a lofty character to his long exertions on behalf of the oppressed and the unfortunate. The simple mention of Poland wakes almost immediately the image of another thought that brings to the lips the name of the late lamented LORD DUDLEY COURTS STUART. How natural that I, a Pole, should feel a desire to pay a tribute of the heart to a spirit so noble. I believe I may realise my wishes, by paying the homage of my mind to you, my



THE

HISTORY OF POLAND.

FOR more than half a century, Poland has been an object of attention to the statesman and the philosopher, and a constant theme of sympathy to the civilised world. Yet, strange to say, the voice of truth, although repeatedly raised by the brightest intellects on behalf of her sacred rights, passed away as if unheeded, leaving only a satisfactory recollection, as a legacy to posterity, that crime of such a magnitude as the dismemberment of Poland was not suffered to take place unnoticed. But, whilst the sentiments of indignation of the just manifested themselves periodically, studying the suitableness of the occasion, the guilty parties spared no effort in disseminating false statements, with the object of palliating their conduct. Germany, in particular, furnished a host of apologists, strong in the spirit of enmity and malignity, that takes delight in crushing its victim with the weapons of vindictiveness and calumny. They were followed by others of still meander character, who let their talent on hire, and

shrunk not from giving an air of seriousness and sincerity to the grossest misrepresentations. The literary market teemed with such malevolent productions. Poland has been denounced as a land of slavery and anarchy; that she was incapable of governing herself; that her dissolution was a benefit to humanity and to the cause of order; and that her happiness could only be consolidated under the *wise and paternal rule* of her three neighboring powers.

If the full tide of such a vicious propaganda did not succeed in carrying away public opinion, it must be ascribed to the vitality of its instinctive good judgment. However, strong traces of mischief became discernible, and the British mind, little familiar with the genius of Sclavonic nations and its tendency, instead of consulting the unquestionable native authorities, as the only means calculated to satisfy the curiosity and conviction of an inquirer, it took the easiest road to book-making, and often reechoed libels under the imposing name of the 'History of Poland.'

Amongst the few who promulgated, with self-complaisance, erroneous ideas, the Pamphlet by a 'Manchester Manufacturer' acquired a singular notoriety by the boldness and plausibility with which it insulted truth and the understanding of the public. This intellectual dishonesty was unmasked by the friends of justice, who warded off promptly the venomous current of imposition, and in a great measure have neutralised its contagious effects. Fortunately, for the sake of humanity, the nature of truth is so elevated, that, although it may be disregarded, and even trampled upon, or to all appearance thrown into oblivion, it imperceptibly rises by its own energy and

vitality; like the rising of the sun, it sheds again its bright light, forcing itself upon the attention of the human mind.

Such is now the case with Poland. Notwithstanding the mighty exertions of an unprincipled antagonism, the withering progress of which, similar to a pestilence, ruffled for a time the serenity of thought and sentiment, still its sting, though left in the wound, did not produce the anticipated bad result. The great political misfortunes of Poland, like the sight of the ruins of a vast sacred temple, conjure up a solemn contemplation; even the very picture of destruction assumes the majesty of a holy sanctuary of the rights of a nation crushed by the lawless hand of brigandage and oppression. But the seriousness of grief, and the sharpness of anguish, relax, generally, their poignancy under the soothing influence of time, and it gives a calm surface to the deep hidden flow of strong feelings that the smallest cause could wake their energy again to action. Thus, the recollection of the wrongs of Poland, although honorably sustained and fondly cherished by the generous, seemed to grow fainter and fainter from year to year. However, no sooner had the sudden combination of circumstances multiplied the difficulties of Europe, than the necessity of her reëstablishment as an independent State presented itself to every mind as the only material guarantee for the future stability of peace, in the maintenance of which humanity and the progress of civilisation are deeply interested. That wide-spread conviction sprung up spontaneously, as if the subject had been under long and minute consideration.

The favorable tide of public opinion appeared to me

an opportunity which is one of those rare occurrences that has for its object to predispose the mind to prosecute, with intelligence and vigor, the investigation of difficult problems, in order to reörganise and adjust the balance and interest of society. Such an opportunity seems to call for a comprehensive sketch, illustrating the genius, the character, and tendency of the political career of Poland, that it may throw a broader light upon her claims and their merit. Yielding to the dictates of such an impression, I present the following outline of the principal facts calculated to remove the bias of every prejudice. The task and province of History embrace an extensive and variegated field for the exercise of thought. Now, a narrative of strife and battles make a fearful revelation of the workings of the mighty passions; now, the manifestations of impulses of a noble nature endeavor to restore harmony and elevation to the mission and destiny of the human race. On the present occasion, a hurried glance will be cast at the whole scenery, and a selection made suitable to the narrow limits of the volume.

The origin of the Poles, like that of every other nation, is obscured by a cloud of perplexing conjectures. Indeed, it would be a hopeless task to clear away the accumulated dust of ages, which has entombed every trace of the primitive history of nations. Even tradition itself, or poetry, the two earliest sources from which some assistance is derived in similar researches, throw but unsatisfactory light upon the subject. Let it be left to the antiquarians to be in a perpetual motion, cheering up their weary steps with the hope of recovering the lost link of races.

The formation of Polish society may be traced to the fifth century of the christian era. However, the dawn of its early days scarcely deserves to be referred to, as it is dim, though ornamented by fiction. It began to emerge itself into a broader and clearer light in the tenth century, when Christianity became gradually identified with its sentiments, and thus initiated its genius into the unity of the western European civilisation. Whilst this fortunate change in sentiments and ideas was taking place in Poland, giving a new direction to the development and aspirations of her spirit, Russia accepted, also, the element of Christianity as the condition of her future vitality, but through the agency of the East. Hence, Poland and Russia from the earliest period assumed a mission of antagonism, as the difference of religion itself seemed to assign to each a distinct destination. The former manifested at all times perfect harmony with the progress of ameliorations, and the true interests of humanity, being moved by the same pulsation as Western Europe; the latter, moulded into a cast of the Greek-Asiatic notion, had no sympathy nor community of purpose with the rest of the European family.

That hostility, grown strong in the lapse of ages, at last burst forth with all virility in our present days, filling the whole world with gloomy apprehensions of melancholy disasters. As Poland sustained the brunt, and kept in check for a long time all the movements of that common enemy, to whose rapacity she first fell a victim, a narrative of her political career will possess at this moment an additional attraction. That the whole subject may be brought under our consideration, in a manner bearing the stamp of a systematic and

orderly arrangement, I shall divide it into four periods.

The FIRST PERIOD embraces a dynasty of Absolute Kings, called Piast, who reigned from A.D. 842 to A.D. 1370. They succeeded each other in the following order :—

	A.D.
1. Piast	842
2. Ziemowit	861
3. Leshek	892
4. Ziemomyslaw	913
5. Mieczyslaw	962
6. Boleslaw the Great	992
7. Mieczyslaw II.	1025
8. Rixa (Queen Regent)	1034
9. Casimir	1040
10. Boleslaw the Bold	1058
11. Wladyslaw I.	1080
12. Boleslaw III.	1102
13. Wladyslaw II.	1139
14. Boleslaw IV.	1147
15. Mieczyslaw	1173
16. Casimir II.	1177
17. Leshek the White	1194
18. Boleslaw V.	1227
19. Leshek the Black	1279
20. Przemyslaw	1295
21. Wenceslas	1300
22. Wladyslaw III.	1305
23. Casimir the Great, the last of the Piast dynasty	1333
24. Louis of Hungary	1370
25. Jadwiga, his daughter	1382

The SECOND PERIOD represents a Constitutional Monarchy, presided by a dynasty of Jagiellons, from A.D. 1386 to A.D. 1573.

	A.D.
1. Wladyslaw IV., Jagiellon; the Grand Duke of Lithuania married Jadwiga Queen of Poland	1386

	A.D.
2. Wladyslaw V.	1434
3. Casimir IV.	1445
4. John Albert	1492
5. Alexander.	1501
6. Sigismund	1506
7. Sigismund II., Augustus	1548

The THIRD PERIOD—the Elective Monarchy, from A.D. 1573 to A.D. 1764.

	A.D.
1. Henry of Valois	1574
2. Stephen Batory	1575
3. Sigismund III., Vasa	1587
4. Wladyslaw VI., Vasa	1633
5. John Casimir, Vasa.	1648
6. Michael Korybut	1669
7. John Sobieski	1674
8. Frederick Augustus II.	1696
9. Stanislaus Leszczyuski	1706
10. Frederick Augustus, restored	1709
11. Frederick Augustus III.	1733
12. Stanislaus Poniatowski	1764

The FOURTH PERIOD exhibits the strenuous and constant efforts of the Poles to redress their social grievances, and free their internal administration from foreign influence, and to establish on a solid basis their Government and their national independence, from A.D. 1764 to our present day.

The First Period.

DYNASTY OF ABSOLUTE KINGS.

A.D. 842 TO A.D. 1370.

THE First Period is principally remarkable for its warlike genius, and, on that account, is more calculated to illustrate the energy of different human passions, than the elevated condition of general intelligence. If we consider that the early society was weak and feeble in its political bond ; that royalty had not as yet a sufficiently strong arm to enforce its authority, even within the limits of its own dominion, as the deeply rooted habits of local independence oftentimes opposed a formidable barrier to all its movements and aspirations ; that the kings themselves had but an imperfect conception of their mission, and sacrificed the unity of the State, by having repeatedly divided its colossal dignity among their sons, in the spirit of a patrimonial provision ; no wonder that the progress of ameliorations was slow, and athwart tempestuous difficulties. However, it was a steady progress towards the fullest development of national, moral, and physical resources. For a long time the surrounding circumstances made

the profession of war an absolute necessity, as the pressure of the hostile German element on the one hand, and that of the Muscovites and Tartars on the other, alternately ruffled the peaceful serenity of domestic life.

It is the painful task of History to have to devote voluminous pages to the harrowing scenes of carnage, and repeated struggles, as if humanity had no higher destiny than to be merely the prey of mutual robberies and murders. But the struggles sustained by the mighty principle of self-preservation, are calculated to call forth into activity the best human energies and spirit, which give an interesting coloring to fortitude as well as perseverance, and refine the sentiments of devotedness by the unity and elevation of purpose. This sentiment, as civilisation and intelligence advanced, assumed a still nobler character, of which patriotism is the beau ideal.

In this feature may be traced a striking difference between the Poles and other Sclavonic tribes—none of them has so prominently developed its individuality in this respect. It would seem as if Poland had a mission to be in the van of Sclavonic civilisation—to bear the brunt of struggles in defending and preserving the purity and dignity of its primitive character. Her earliest political career fully justifies this conclusion. The martial spirit of her kings, Boleslaw the Great, Boleslaw the Bold, and Boleslaw the Third, not only proved formidable to the neighboring foes, but it gave also a majestic appearance of unity of a powerful State. However, both the kings and the nation did not complete as yet their apprenticeship in the art of politics, and showed a want of mature

experience, and even understanding, in the management of their own interest. The former, in direct opposition to the advancement of the solidity of one vast social structure, which their military talent succeeded to erect during their life time, followed the habit of parcelling out its grandeur among the sons; the latter clung with tenacity to the importance of local traditions and peculiarities. The combination of such circumstances raised many a storm that shook to its foundation the fabric of a compact state. Nevertheless, the desolation, although harrowing in itself, was not of so dark a hue as the one that was spread over Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France, under the auspices of the feudal system. A more gentle system than the one mentioned regulated the earliest social relations in Poland. Its spirit was peculiar to her alone, the gradual development of which gave a tenacious vitality and unity to the national sentiment, that made her in prosperity shine to the best advantage with all the high qualities of civilisation, whilst in adversity it made her display the noblest civil and military virtues, and under the pressure of the greatest political misfortunes, its energy and vigor remained unimpaired, and survived the rudest shocks of melancholy vicissitudes.

The chequered career of nations is an interesting phenomenon, which, like dissolving views, exhibits a succession of different ideas that propelled the human mind to action, and regulated the tide of sentiments, passions, and aspirations. In surveying their variegated scenes the greatest attention should be exercised, that judgment may be strengthened and satisfied as to the harmony existing between all parts towards the accomplishment of some great end.

The highest development of good, as the cement of all social relations, is generally the professed object of every effort of mankind. Making the most liberal allowances for the misapplication of its energies through the workings of its mighty passions, that nation possesses great merit which, in the midst of political blunders, or of its false spirit in the social organisation, still bent its steps towards the expansion of civilisation and freedom: this may be said of Poland. Taking even the most unfavorable view of her annals, there is abundant evidence, when placed side by side in comparison with the annals of other countries, that she alone pursued steadily, in spite of many difficulties, a course most calculated to multiply national energies and to create the strongest attachment to independence. Owing to this circumstance, if we were to examine all the wars in which she was engaged, the majority of them had for their object to repel merely the pressure of the hostile elements of Germany, Muscovites, Tartars, or the Turks. The restlessness of an aggressive spirit did not characterise her policy. At various times the offer of the crown from a neighbor was refused, and the Polish kings acted as umpires in composing the quarrels among the other states. The consolidation of her national unity was owing, not so much to the warlike genius of the people, or to the superiority of administrative institutions, although the one and the other had some share in the accomplishment of that work; but, rather, to the pervading influence throughout the whole country of one sentiment, of one idea, to the consideration of which all other sentiments and ideas were readily sacrificed,

and which constituted a strong link of fellowship, that is to say, the love of native land, the latter being personified by the expressive appellation of ‘a mother.’ It is for the defence of their common mother that the Poles were in the habit of taking up arms and stimulated to the performance of heroic deeds. It is in the same name that their private quarrels were often-times disarmed, or ended to the mutual joy of concerned parties. That the intrinsic character of Poland may be fully appreciated, let us make a clear exposition of each reflection cast by the nature of her society.

The origin of classes seems to be a simple process of a division of duties, which are an absolute necessity in the aggregate state of man. Thus, in Poland, the agriculturist and the equestrian order sprung up from a natural combination of circumstances. The one had to till the land; the other to fight battles against their common foe. However, in time of peace, many members of the equestrian order exchanged the sword for the plough. As the occasions for war multiplied, a wider distinction must have taken place between the two classes, agreeably to the spirit of their respective occupations. The institution of the equestrian order, or nobility, was formed upon the basis of equality of right and privileges. No accidental wealth, or its influence, could disturb the smoothness of its level, or give rise to precedence in opposition to real merit. Every individual, even in the humblest walk of life, had the same chance of becoming a member of the order if he distinguished himself by bravery, zeal, and devotedness in the public service, either in war or peace. Thus, patriotism, civic and military

virtues, constant readiness to make the largest sacrifices for the safety of the country and the common good, were the chief and the only qualifications opening the road to the elevation to the rank of nobility. Once that honor earned, it descended as a legacy to all the members of the family, without the slightest variation as to the enjoyment of privileged advantages. This practice gradually created a large number of citizens, each conscious of his individual importance, animated by a lofty spirit of independence, and united in the fellowship of equality, the sentiment of which had an amazing result in fostering and spreading the dignified attachment to liberty.

The rise and progress of such an institution within the bosom of a primitive society could not but prompt its organisation to emerge from its rude moral and political state, and assume a new position in carrying forward the development of national grandeur. Consequently, the equestrian order, as the principal moving spring of action, took the lead, both in time of war and peace, and that which was at first merely a just concession of society, became soon after converted into a matter of right. Therefore, to conduct and follow warlike expeditions was looked upon as one of the most honorable professions, whilst the habit of deliberating in common assembly upon the best means for ensuring success to the undertaking made them exercise the same prerogative in regulating also civil administration. However, it does not appear that this usurpation, if I may call it so, had for its object, in its early stage, to sink the agriculturists into social degradation.

There is no trace in the Polish annals that would

justify or attach a stigma of slavery to that class of the people. The very right, which each of them possessed at all times, to be raised to the dignity of the equestrian order, evidences that no wide barrier stood between the two classes, with the exception that the admission to the honors of the latter required of the candidate proofs of heroic virtues. Doubtless, the chain of circumstances had invisibly prepared, in the course of time, a great change in drawing a distinct line of demarcation between them ; now, in consequence of a general practice of reducing war-prisoners to a condition of dependence, to whom the tilling of the land was oftentimes entrusted. Again, the secret pressure of Germanic influence caused the idea of the feudal system to take root in a modified shape, and the combination of both gave existence, in the end, to a system of *ad stricti glebae*, that made all the agriculturists share in the same fate.

However, the evil genius of the feudal system, with all its terrible realities, did not darken the horizon of Poland. She presents a different aspect altogether from the one contemporaneous in Germany, Italy, France, or Great Britain. In the latter countries the powerful barons, engrossed only with their individual importance, had no consideration for the rights of others, and, following the dictates of a lawless spirit, have reduced the whole society to one agglomeration of abject slavery, whilst the right of carrying on war on their private account converted them into a band of merciless brigands, to whom no tie was sacred enough that could arrest the promptings of selfishness in the execution of cruel deeds of desolation or destruction. In Poland, although a

large number of the equestrian order in poor circumstances depended upon the patronage of the magnats (rich), or were in their service, yet the peculiar tenacity with which each clung to the principle of equality made the rich study and respect the cherished prejudices. Instead of grasping at power by any presumptuous title, the liberality of sentiment and chivalrous mind could alone recommend them to general favor.

Hence, the mischievous consequences of private aggression upon each other, so much identified with the feudal system, have been in a great measure nipped, because the equestrian order, in its relation to the rich, lost nothing of its dignity. Freedom of action and thought was its first condition. No bounden duties of vassalage constituted a link between them. A simple command was not sufficient to ensure obedience or to increase the ranks of their followers. It was necessary to canvass the opinion, or to set afloat a stirring idea, in the name of which the passions or enthusiasm could be roused. Such a road to influence or importance did not conduct to the narrow end of framing merely a worthless ambition. On the contrary, it led to the formation of a habit, the agency and operation of which gave a steady direction to the development of high political aspirations, that at last enabled Poland to occupy the most brilliant position among the European states. Her social elements, however, might have been defective in harmony. This want was supplied by constant expansion of greater vitality, of a spirit watchful and active in the cause of the best interest of the whole community. Consequently, when Germany,

France, and Great Britain, exhausted by the violence of their intestine troubles, allowed themselves to be reduced to a complete forgetfulness of their rights, and gradually bent their neck to the yoke of absolutism, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the contemporary Poland, faithful to the tendency of her national genius, stood alone as the shield of the true majesty of nations, that shines only in the enjoyment of freedom.

There is another point which demands a brief explanation, as a sequel completing the picture of the social state of Poland. The most erroneous notion seems to have taken possession of many minds, that the absence of the influence of the middle class in her politic body caused a development of weakness, with all its troublesome consequences, that hurried the State to its final dissolution.

If my readers were to form this judgment upon this subject with regard to Poland from a German, French, Italian, or English point of view, wrong as their inference would be, no objection would be taken at their conclusion; for, agreeably to the spirit of their social state, there was no middle class in Poland. But, if we strictly examine the features of Polish society itself, no such deficiency will be found, except that it differed in character from the rest of Europe. When, in other countries, every baron at the head of his vassals carried on some petty enterprise to which he was prompted by his own ambition, or revenge, or love of plunder, personal safety could only have been purchased by submission to the oppressive protectorate of the powerful. This mode of existence having grown intolerable, close

and walled cities afforded shelter, where communities entered into an obligation of mutual defence and protection. A successful resistance gave rise to the spirit of liberty, and to the admission of the middle class to a place in the Legislature, an event that had great influence on the changes in the character of Government. It tempered the rigor of aristocratical oppression with a proper mixture of popular freedom.

But in Poland, the necessity did not exist for producing a similar effect. The spirit of liberty was widely spread over the whole range of her domains. The numerous body of the equestrian order, small proprietors, constituted the strength of her middle class, with that superior advantage, that it had no occasion ever to cringe or stand in fear of the rich as a distinct caste, against whose usurpations or arrogance it proved the most efficient check.

From the singular community of sentiment of equality between the rich and poor members of the equestrian order, the idea of public good grew to be generally familiar, and became the chief spring of action, insomuch that ambition itself, when seeking revenge either against the king or a rival, the object of private feuds, was obliged to dissimulate its real purpose, by throwing over it the cloak of some public grievance, in order to obtain the good will of the followers.

Such general disposition of the Polish nation was favorable to the peaceful commercial pursuits of the inhabitants of towns, whom to molest or subject to heavy contributions, no attempt had ever been made by the rural population. On the contrary, it was the

special care of the Government to attract commerce and industry within their walls. German settlers met with the greatest encouragement; even they were allowed to regulate their affairs by their own laws (*jus Teutonicum*). Again, the Jews found an honorable asylum against the horrors of unrelenting persecution, to which that unfortunate race everywhere was subjected. This fact is a beautiful illustration that, even in the rude times of the remote past, the principle of humanity has been applied to the regulation of the Government. The Polish towns, therefore, had a mixed population, and in many places the foreign element predominated—that is to say, German merchants, artisans, and the Jews, to whom great advantages were granted. Indeed, it may be said that they formed a State in the State, as they enjoyed the protection of distinct laws (*jus Teutonicum*), whilst the Polish laws (*jus Polonicum*) were only in force in the rural districts.

Thus, it can be easily accounted for, the exclusion of the inhabitants of towns from a place in the Legislature. No doubt, that distinction exercised a mischievous influence upon the spirit of town inhabitants, by fostering an attachment to foreign institutions, which perpetuated also the recollection of their foreign origin. However, they had no occasion to desire a change, as no violence or oppression kept them in constant distraction in their mercantile or industrious pursuits. There was a tacit harmony in the workings of these two distinct elements in the State. In consequence, if the Polish towns did not raise themselves to the imposing height of political influence, or failed to possess a corporate administration of their own,

in imitation particularly of Italy or France, in their stead they merged their individuality into the unity of one nation, in acknowledgment of the superior tendency of Polish society.

In reality, we may trace a wide difference in the manifestations of the noble nature of liberty grown on the Polish plains, and her sister nursed within the walled cities of Italy or France. The latter, crippled in the scope of development, contracted narrowness of sentiment, corresponding with the narrowness of the localities of her birth-place—a constant prey to petty passions, lost all sympathy with everything that was outside of her seclusion. It had even an ill-will at every other city for raising separate and their own altars to her glory. Mutual jealousies kept up the same spirit which once animated the baronial halls—there was no regard paid to the welfare of each other—quarrels and wars were her food, until, exhausted in resources, each and all fell a victim to stern despotism. Such was not the fate of liberty in Poland. Rivetted to no walled town in feeling or thought, expansion was the condition of her existence. Far and wide, she was scouring the country, and everywhere sowing a germ of attachment to herself. Thus, gradually, a link has been established between the distant parts, which gave unity of action to their tendencies and purpose. This is one of the causes why Poland was enabled early to manifest superior strength in keeping back the pressure of her numerous enemies; to occupy for a long time an honorable position on the stage of human life, in the pursuit and enjoyment of freedom; and at last, in the midst of cruel reverses, though fallen, prostrate, and trampled upon, to preserve a

vitality of spirit that strikes terror in the heart of her successful oppressors.

Such were the materials which entered into a combination in the formation of Polish society, and lent their agency in the progress of its career. In the beginning of the fourteenth century, under the management of a firm and energetic ruler, Wladyslaw III., surnamed Lokietek (meaning 'Short,' 'Little'), it accomplished one part of its mission by the realisation of national unity, which may be considered as the leading tendency and idea of the first period of its annals. That unity was still more consolidated by the wise administration of his son Casimir, honored by history with the appellation of 'The Great.' His superior sagacity, and far-sighted penetration, suggested to him the most salutary expedient as the only one that could give strength and stability to the common interest and to the spirit of a nation, an expedient that proved most successful and beneficial. He applied himself with unabated zeal to supersede local habits and their importance in the administration of justice by the uniformity of laws. In this attempt, he left an interesting legacy to posterity, a collection of laws known under the name of the Wislican Code, called so from the place, Wislica, where the Diet, or Parliament, held its assembly in 1347. As a legislative document it bears a noble testimony to the excellent intentions of the king, and to the general intelligence of its framers. Every department of social interest engrossed their most earnest attention. Industry and commerce received a due encouragement. Education had a considerable share, especially, of the king's interest, with whom originated

a plan for the establishment of a University at Cracow.

But, what is of the greatest importance, we meet for the first time with traces of an effort to define and settle lawfully a distinction in the social organisation, having a tendency to secure a high preëminence of the equestrian order over the agriculturists and other inhabitants, to which encroachments King Casimir offered the most strenuous opposition on every occasion. That solicitude of the king for the welfare and freedom of those who most stood in want of his protection, drew upon him the surname of the 'King of the Peasants,' which was given to him in derision by his opponents, little anticipating that this epithet would be the best clue for the historian in the appreciation of the truly elevated character of the king. However, this is not the single merit of Casimir the Great. By his recurrence to the deliberations and decisions of the Diets, he laid a solid foundation to the attachment of a representative system. Poland began to assume a more compact, more significant, position on the political horizon. There was no necessity, as in England, to write in blood the Magna Charta, or to compel the kings to take repeatedly an oath for keeping it in respect, which, however, they have as often disregarded as it suited their purpose.

The Polish kings were more in unison with the spirit of the country; and as it behoves the rulers, they officiated themselves at the initiation of the nation into the knowledge of its rights. The glory, therefore, of planting the tree of freedom in Poland belongs as much to her kings as to the nation—both were animated by the same sentiment. But, when

Poland was taking this favorable direction, there was a dark cloud visible in the distance, at the same time slowly rising, as if in the depth of its bosom a still darker futurity was hidden, threatening, with its antagonistic appearance, to overcast the bright dawn of her prospects.

The Duchy of Moscow, that was lying torpid ever since 1240, A.D., under the oppression of the successors of Battookhan, who became independent of the Mogul Empire, under the name of the Khans of Kiptchak, and from whom the princes of Russia received their investiture, began to show signs of life in the beginning of the fourteenth century, with a distinct design of rising to preëminence over other princes, not by the right of the sword of a conqueror, but by the assiduity of its Dukes to ingratiate themselves into the high favor of the Khans at any sacrifice, by whose assistance they made encroachments upon the rights of other princes, and thus were increasing their power. The rise, progress, and the successful formation of the Muscovite Empire embodied within itself the spirit of Genghis Khan, or Tamerlane, that it might in its turn become the evil genius of the best interests of humanity, civilisation, and liberty. Its infant essays of aggression, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, gave warning, especially to Poland, as to the probable struggles she one day would have to sustain in keeping back its pressure. Still, danger was far distant, and the political sagacity of Poland was not sufficiently mature as to preoccupy herself with such calculations. Besides, she had the great work of her internal improvements to carry out, to which the reign of Casimir the Great was particularly devoted. Unfortunately,

the life-time of a good man, though it may extend to an old age, is generally too short for the benefit of others. He closed the career of the Piast dynasty with glory and honor, by leaving Poland in a fair way to grandeur and prosperity. The reign of his nephew, Louis, King of Hungary, was only an interruption to the speedier development of his predecessor's ideas. He is entitled to be mentioned simply as the father of Queen Jadwiga, with whom Poland entered upon a new phasis of her political life.

The Second Period.

CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY.

A.D. 1386 TO A.D. 1573.

It is rather a curious fact, that in the remote past the system of a constitutional monarchy had a more comprehensive and favorable development in Poland than in any other country. Its growth was natural; no violence lent its assistance to wrest it from a power that stood in direct opposition to its existence. On the contrary, the kings and the equestrian order took an equal interest in adjusting their mutual pretensions, without ever disgracing themselves with perjuries, fraud, or reckless disregard for imposed obligations. If the equestrian order, or nobles, occasionally betrayed too much eagerness in multiplying their privileges, it was a passion, not of a small fraction nursed in the lap of arrogant feudalism, but of a very wide circle of men connected by family ties with the humblest class, whilst by privileges with the rich one. The sentiment of independence, I may say, was thus inoculated into the circulation of the blood of the nation. Many Englishmen do commit a serious

error in judging the genius of Polish society with a fixed notion, and in the spirit of their own. The simple mention of nobility often suggests a train of misimpressions in minds familiar only with the feudal system. In fact, the nobles of Poland may bear a fair comparison to a political body known under the appellation of electors in constitutional countries. Those, therefore, who, addressing themselves to the popular prejudices, endeavor to mislead the attention of the mass by throwing a kind of reproach upon Poland, that her nobles formed a nation within the nation, by such a denunciation they—unwillingly, perhaps—pay the highest tribute to her elevated political condition; because a fact is brought by them to notice, that a considerable portion of the nation exercised the same right in matters of public interest, and enjoyed equal privileges in all their relations.

In reality, their number, nearer our own times, amounted to more than one million. Surely, a nation that possessed so powerful an element, jealous of its rights, and favorable to the expansion of freedom, cannot be called a nation merely of castes. It has a right to a better title—rather that of a nurse of the love of liberty, to which it clung through the whole of its checkered career. From the very reason that the progress of a constitutional monarchy in Poland differed in its character from the western powers. In England, the admission of burghers to the place of legislature was exceedingly slow in producing a proportioned effect to the importance of the event. It could not be otherwise. The burghers, taught by ages to stand in awe both of the barons and the kings, betrayed always too much timidity and sub-

mission in the presence of a power that knew not how to respect the very laws which had its sanction. Hence, the authority of Parliament had sore trials to bear, and, at last, in the midst of the heart-rending struggles of the roses, sunk beneath the weight of its own weakness. In Poland the spirit of independence had no sub-divisions. In one mighty tide it carried the rich and the poor, whose distinction on the occasion was merged in the community of sentiment, interest, and privileged dignity; consequently, the augmentation of parliamentary authority had a powerful support, and never lost its ground in the progress of ascendancy. In this manner, when the absolute monarchies were consolidating themselves in Europe in the thirteenth century, Poland alone stood in the midst of them, acquiring steadily a more regular form and definite organisation of a representative government, sustained by the deliberations of the senate, and a separate house of delegates sent by each district.

It is remarkable, also, that the march of this development met with encouragement from the concurrence of favorable circumstances. Thus, King Louis, having a strong desire to secure the succession to the Polish throne to his youngest daughter, Jadwiga—for he had no sons—stopped at no sacrifice that he might only attain his cherished object. Among the concessions extending the liberties of the equestrian order, the reduction of the permanent land tax paid to the crown, to an almost nominal value, proved a source of the most important consequences, as it made the kings dependant upon the supplies granted by a Diet or Parliament, convoked for that purpose. From that date a solid foundation was laid to a

political structure, remarkable for its grandeur or peculiarity.

The accession of Queen Jadwiga was immortalised by two great events that followed each other in quick succession. Her marriage with Jagiello, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, in 1386, added new splendor and strength to the Polish crown by a voluntary annexation of an extensive country to Poland, which hitherto stood in hostile array against her. Again, the introduction of Christianity met with no farther opposition among the Lithuanians, as the conversion of the Grand Duke, who received baptism and took the name of Wladyslaw, inclined them to follow his example. It is astonishing that Paganism should have maintained itself, and lingered to the beginning of the fifteenth century, in that spot alone in Europe. In this instance, we have the most beautiful illustration that the agency of love was a successful missionary of the religion of love, whilst the mighty and constant efforts for more than a century and half of a religious order, the Teutonic Knights, proved of no avail, who, for that special object, were invited by Conrad, a Polish Prince, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, that they might settle themselves in Prussia, in order to Christianise the idolatrous population of Prussia and Lithuania.

But the failure of their long labor has the amplest apology in the fierce spirit which characterised their whole career. Beneath the dress of a monk every bad passion was hidden and cherished. The lust of power made them violate every law, human and divine. Instead of being the heralds of peace in harmony with the sacred sentiment of the Scriptures, which they

intended the heathens to venerate and adopt, they kindled a war of extermination, and fed constantly its fires, spreading desolation and misery; and wherever their ascendancy was established, the only boon they had to offer to the natives was the boon of an oppressive bondage. Their arrogance knew no limits. Under the garb of religious zeal they became powerful—the most ungrateful and troublesome neighbor to Poland. On many occasions she was involved with them in serious wars. Already, in the reign of Wladyslaw Lokietek, a great battle was fought at Polowce in A.D. 1331, in which they suffered a terrible chastisement by a total defeat. But Jagiello, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, in becoming the King of Poland, had the satisfaction to revenge the long heart-rending sufferings of his country, to which it was subjected by continuous invasions of those Teutonic Knights, by crushing them at the battle of Grünwald, in 1410, on which occasion the Grand Master of the Order, Ulric von Jungingen, and a considerable number of the most distinguished knights, were slain.

Although the King of Poland neglected to turn to the best advantage so complete a victory, nevertheless, much has been added to the majesty of the crown by such a brilliant assertion of its superiority. The founder of the dynasty of the Polish kings opened a magnificent prospect of the political grandeur of the kingdom, and extended the influence of Polish sentiment and ideas, by granting to the nobles of Lithuania the same rights and privileges as were enjoyed in Poland. However, for some time, opposition was offered to the fusion of the two distinct national aspirations, especially by the restless and remarkable

genius of Witold, the brother of Jagiello, who at one time enlisted the support of Sigismund, the Emperor of Germany, in favor of his aim to erect Lithuania into an independent state. It required the whole vigilance and energy of the Poles to frustrate a scheme so fatal to their interests. With Witold's death the spirit of animosity rapidly began to subside, and was replaced by a strong bond of fraternity, that carried them together through good or ill fortune. Thus, Lithuania, without losing her original individuality, formed a harmonious unity with Poland, upon which the stability and strength of every state depends.

This fortunate incident contributed greatly to the rapid and gigantic strides in her political career. Her majestic attitude inspired the neighbors with confidence in the mighty protection that she could afford to them in time of need and danger. Hungary, threatened by the pressure of the Ottoman power, already elated by wonderful successes under the eminent Sultan Amurath II., united its crown with Poland, and the youthful king of Poland and Hungary, Wladyslaw V., the son of Wladyslaw Jagiello, whom he succeeded in 1434, led his troops in 1442 against the Turks, whose formidable host began to excite the gloomiest apprehensions as to the safety of Constantinople and the Grecian Empire.

The first encounter of the Poles with the Turks was triumphant, and taught the latter to respect the new barrier presented to their hitherto victorious progress; but in the next campaign, at the battle of Varna, fought in 1444, the forces of the king of Poland and Hungary were cut to pieces, and it became

still more memorable by the loss of life of the king himself. This melancholy event gave a warning to Poland, that one day she would have to sustain the brunt of struggles in her own defence, and in the interest of Christendom, against the warlike genius of Mahometanism; and her annals, as if not to lose sight of it, attached to the memory and the name of the killed king, the appellation of Varnentzik, indicating the place of the misfortune with which he met. After these reverses Poland separated herself from Hungary, and under Casimir IV., brother of the predecessor, steadily pursued a course consonant with the national tendency, in giving a more defined character to her organic life.

Numerous Diets that were held during the long reign of that king contributed to the enlargement of general intelligence in matters of public business. Every important question, whether in reference to levying new taxes, or bearing upon war or peace, had the most earnest attention, and the disposal of them became a part of its attributes. Thus, although the regal power maintained an imposing aspect by the extensiveness of its dominions, it was restricted in the exercise of the arbitrary will that might have been engendered by restless ambition. On the other hand, the augmentation of parliamentary prerogatives inspired the wealthy with a desire of creating for themselves a new distinction of *præeminence* over the equestrian order, and an attempt was made in 1503, to induce the assembled Diet to entertain the proposed innovation that would have destroyed the equality of the nobles, and given rise to a narrow oligarchy, more injurious in its effects to the interest of society than

the abuses of a single despot. But the opposition proved too spirited and strong ; the scheme fell to the ground. It was a triumph of liberal ideas over a notion suggested in imitation of the feudal system.

However, the same opposition, at the same Diet, coöperated in the enactment of new regulations, which had the most pernicious tendency. Under the pretext of preserving the agricultural prosperity, it was ordered that in future the agriculturists should not leave their habitations, unless they procured a substitute in their place. Their children also could not absent themselves in search of employment, or with the object of studying any trade, without the knowledge and consent of the land-owner. It is true that individual liberty was guaranteed to them, and the intention of the law was to protect them ; nevertheless, this unfortunate act of legislation opened the door to encroachments and abuses, which in the eighteenth century reached its highest summit, insomuch that the land of freedom received the sorrowful stigma of the land of serfage.

I admit this fact with the painful sense of humiliation, and raise my voice to denounce it with an energetic indignation. But with no small satisfaction I am enabled to observe also, that the vitality of a regenerative principle preserved at all times its soundness, and made Poland the cradle of sentiments favorable to the reëstablishment of liberty and justice. The uncompromised equality of a numerous nobility fostered a spirit ready to make the most enthusiastic sacrifices for the preservation of national independence, and that spirit was a depositary of the best hope cherished by humanity. If an evil wormed itself,

causing the social health gradually to sink into decline, taking even the most unfavorable view of the case, no one would deny that there was still a germ of every improvement, which, under genial circumstances, might have brought forth abundance of excellent fruit. For the present, limiting our inquiry to the fifteenth century, the contrast of the condition of different European states, would incline the scale of advantage in favor of Poland.

Through the exercise of comparison, the mind generally arrives at a more comprehensive conclusion as to the real worth of things under its consideration. The annals of mankind are calculated to display their distinct peculiarities in a more vivid manner. I wish I could place my readers in a position to have a panoramic view of the contemporaneous scenes of the active life of various nations at that remote period. In the midst of wars, internal struggles, and multifarious monstrous crimes, the attention would be only relieved from the excitement of painful impressions and horror, when resting in its turn upon the milder physiognomy of recollections of Poland. Rough as her character might have been, in every step, in every transaction of hers, an idea manifested itself, which, like a mirror, reflected the common thoughts of society—an idea of the expansion of freedom. Every circumstance, every incident, seems to have been bent for the attainment of that object, whilst in other countries, passions, violence, individual selfishness, rent asunder harmony of feeling, blunted the consciousness of human dignity, imposed the most humiliating consequences upon the proud races prostrate by exhaustion, and compelled them to relinquish their rights in favor of stringent oppression.

Such was the contrast in the relative position of Poland, in regard to the rest of Europe, in the fifteenth century. There was no interruption, no link lost, in the march of her career; and in the sixteenth century she had no rival in securing the widest application to the principle essential in the regulation of a civilised state, of which she was then the best personification. I do not say that the train of transactions had always a smooth or fortunate passage. From time to time the affliction of calamities spread a gloomy diversion in the public spirit; yet, in the midst of the distraction occasioned by wars with the Teutonic Knights, with the Tartars, Muscovites, and the Turks, no opportunity was neglected of strengthening the vitality of her political energies. Owing to this activity, the influence of Poland commanded great respect abroad. The thrones of Bohemia and Hungary were offered and occupied by the Jagiellonian dynasty, an evidence of the high confidence and estimation with which she inspired those neighboring nations. However, the sagacity of the Poles had not as yet sufficient penetration to detect the combination of future events that might arise from their having suffered the Grand Duchy of Moscow to practise successfully its infant aggression.

This was one of their greatest political blunders. It seems that danger in the distance seldom excites uneasiness or alarm in the minds of many statesmen. Sometimes, too much of self-reliance makes them attach too little importance to facts even of a serious character. Perhaps neither of these charges can be substantiated against the Polish statesmen. Be it as it may, the Grand Duchy of Moscow conceived a scheme of

aggrandisement without having provoked a well-timed opposition on the part of Poland. Ivan Vasilewicz was no sooner invested with the dignity of Duke, in 1462, than he showed himself equal to the execution of it. His first care was to effect a total emancipation from the yoke imposed upon the country by the Tartars ever since A.D. 1240. This he was enabled to accomplish with the aid of a favorable combination of circumstances, which led to the dissolution of the powerful empire of the Khans of Kiptchak, but at the same time, in the very Mongul spirit, he pursued the course of his aggressions. The ancient Republic of the Great Novogorod, as also of Twer, fell victims to his hostility in 1487. The preëminence of the Duke of Moscow began precisely to acquire significance when Poland had assumed a more perfect character of a well organised constitutional monarchy. Thus, two opposite principles, at the close of the fifteenth century, were gathering strength, as if conscious that one day they were to meet each other face to face in the murderous struggle of mutual extermination.

The sixteenth century in the life of nations, personified the most interesting and brilliant epoch. The human mind, overwhelmed by an accumulation of superstition, cherished and multiplied during the dark ages, began to manifest uneasiness at its own condition in the course of the middle ages. The Waldenses in the thirteenth century, the Lollards and the Hussites, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, heralded the necessity of the modification of various grievances. The spirit of the times was misunderstood by those who claimed the right of directing it. Councils

called together to devise a remedy against the growing evils, had not sufficient wisdom to know that

‘Of all the tyrannies on human kind
That is the worst which persecutes the mind!’

Much more regard has been shown to antiquated prejudices, to fixed ideas, than to the real moral wants of humanity. On that account, the brightest innovations of thought had no chance of exercising their legitimate influence. Suspicion, jealousy, and above all, the vitiated judgment sustained by the long-established maxims, frowned upon the smallest deviation from the narrowness of their own views and sentiments. Such opposition had its moments of forgetfulness, and by its injudicious conduct roused from a deep slumber the new energies of mankind. The waking was like the sudden waking of an earthquake, and it shook the edifice of society to its very foundation. The Reformation, though in its rise it attacked only the abuses of the Church, soon after, by the force of circumstances, was drifted into a vortex of the new political combinations of which it became a rallying standard. New ideas were starting up like scattered flaming signals, each giving fresh and stronger impulse to kindled passions, aspirations, and even to the greatest mental extravagancies. A terrible convulsion seized the largest portion of Europe. Wars were undertaken, massacres committed, and all these in the sacred name of religion.

In the face of such frightful occurrences, what was the conduct of Poland in the sixteenth century? She was serene and calm, as if aware that man had no right to interfere with the conscience of man. She acted the part of the good Samaritan. Whosoever

stood in need of an asylum, driven abroad by cruel persecutions—every one, without distinction as to the difference of opinion, met with the same hospitality and protection. In our days a similar practice is the pride and boast of Great Britain. This noble development of the British mind will enable it to appreciate fully the high position and character of Poland during the sixteenth century, at a period when a want of safe shelter would have exposed the innocent to the fury of blind passions. However, the office assumed by Poland did not arise either from indifference to the struggle of principles, or accidental caprice; it was the result of the superiority of her institutions. She was one of the links of Western civilisation in ideas and in religion. The consanguinity of elements might have easily kindled a similar conflagration. But the national spirit formed a separate energy, which acted as a counterpoise to other influences. Each member of the numerous equestrian order was a perfect individualisation of that spirit, whilst in the body they formed gigantic unity to any opposition. That spirit consisted in prizes the gift of liberty above every other consideration. The strongest force of jealousy was thrown around it to protect it against any encroachment.

Fortunately, the two kings—Sigismund I., and his son, Sigismund II., Augustus—found themselves in harmony with this sentiment of the country. In consequence, their successive reigns exhibit but one tissue of magnanimity, and of measures distinguished for wisdom. They have carried the views agreeably to the tendency of Polish society, and made the best application of its spirit in the regulation of their conduct

with regard to every emergency. On that account the space of time embraced by the reign of the two Sigismunds, from 1506 to 1572, represents the bloom and buoyancy of Poland's life and of her dazzling hopes. The same respect which has been shown for freedom of thought in the case of individuals was transferred to collective bodies. Thus, the Teutonic Knights, an ecclesiastical order, effected its secularisation under the sanction of the Polish king, and its last Grand Master, Albert of Brandenburg, became a temporal prince in 1525, as a vassal of Poland. It was a remarkable occurrence of startling importance to the progress of new opinions.

This picture, however, would be incomplete if I were to take no notice of its harsher features. No doubt there existed a respectable and influential minority, to whom, especially, religious liberty was altogether obnoxious. They strained every nerve of zeal and official authority to raise a barrier against it. Some acts of violence have been committed in opposition to the spirit of national institutions. They made an attempt at setting themselves above every law, with perfect disregard to the rights handed down from generation to generation as the noblest legacy.. It did not fail to alarm the equestrian order. A single step of encroachment upon their privileges gave the signal for general fermentation, as well as to the unity of their opposition. At the memorable Diet in 1552, it was enacted, that although the ecclesiastical court had a right to investigate every new opinion, and to pass a judgment as to the soundness of its views, yet condemnation of the professed opinion could not affect either individual dignity or individual liberty. In

consequence, the spirit of persecution was nipped in its very bud. Here we have an evidence that Poland had escaped the horrors multiplied elsewhere, by the torch of intolerance, solely in virtue of her social genius. This activity in fortifying herself against internal evils, was rewarded by the happiest result, as at no period she had enjoyed a larger share of tranquillity than during the reign of the two Sigismunds.

Among the foreign wars, the one with the Dukes of Moscow had already a stamp of deep interest in the political transactions of Poland. The character of the contest gave a great deal of uneasiness to the Polish statesmen, even at that early period. The following letter of King Sigismund Augustus, written to Queen Elizabeth, will bear the best testimony to it, and proves his sagacity and foresight, justified by the events of our days:—‘I pray your majesty well to reflect, whether you would permit your merchants to make the Muscovite strong with their cannon, with their powder, and their manufactures. Do not think that he is nobody else’s enemy but mine—*he is the enemy of all Christendom.*’*

This prophetic remonstrance of the Polish king conveys an exact idea of the fearful anticipations and visions which then existed only in the mind of Sigismund Augustus, but which in our days has become an awful reality. From the above document it appears that the Muscovites derived considerable advantages from the trade with England, although the commercial relations scarcely had time to acquire any importance, as the first communication between the two countries took place in 1533, from the accidental

* ‘State Papers.’

discovery of Archangel, made by Richard Chancellor, a bold navigator, then bent on search to open a north-eastern passage through the polar regions. Yet, if we consider that the sixteenth century effected a complete transformation in the life of England—that her spirit, hitherto pent up within the limits of continental aspirations, launched itself on its more genial element of maritime career—we may easily conceive, that no sooner a new spot in the distance became known, than it attracted the attention of the enterprising, and of the lovers of adventures. Thus, Archangel owed its rapid rise to opulence solely to the trade of England. To this circumstance let it be added that the contemporary Czar of Moscow, Ivan IV., whose ferocity of character history commemorates by the appellation of '*the Terrible*,' displayed extraordinary activity and perseverance in harassing Poland with the calamities of war, and with Queen Elizabeth kept on an amicable correspondence. The Polish king, therefore, had sufficient ground for making the above expostulation, coupled with significant warning. However, in these wars with the Czar of Moscow, the superiority of Poland was still conspicuously sustained.

Independently of the glory that belongs to Poland of that period as a land of freedom, she was very fortunate in the personal noble character of both Sigismunds, who added greater lustre to her merits. Sigismund I., to a fine intellectual development joined a calm wisdom, well regulated by the sentiments of justice. More devoted to promoting the prosperity of the country over which he reigned, than to gratify a thirst for power by new acquisitions, he declined accepting the crown of Hungary; and this act of

magnanimous modesty shows to advantage the character of his solid virtues. His son, Sigismund Augustus, has an equal claim to the admiration of posterity. His mental organisation was of an elevated nature, the moral and intellectual being manifested in him in harmonious unity. The following incident of his life may be adduced by way of example.

Sigismund Augustus, in the lifetime of his father, formed a strong attachment to Barbara Radziwill, the daughter of a Lithuanian nobleman, and following the impulse of his heart, he married her clandestinely. But no sooner was he called upon to fill the vacant throne than he revealed the secret to the senators, before his coronation. This disclosure produced great excitement now, in consequence of jealousy and fears, that her relations should obtain a preponderant share of influence at the court. Again, some thought that the marriage was derogatory to the dignity and majesty of the Polish crown. To an almost unanimous clamor of the Diet and the Senate, even the high dignitaries of religion joined their solicitations for a divorce, holding up to the king the temptation of a full pardon from the church for the breach of his oath to his wife, on the plea of absolute necessity. The king remained unmoved and firm. The grandeur of his mind and the purity of his heart were brought together to bear upon the memorable answer returned by him. ‘What,’ exclaimed the king, ‘can you expect that the solemnity of the coronation oath, or any other oath to you, will be faithfully respected by me, if I acted agreeably to your advice, and began my reign with breaking the oath which unites me to my wife? Be it known that my plighted faith is

everything to me, and I shall never purchase a crown by perjury.'

Such magnanimous conduct of Sigismund Augustus, failed not to convert the voice of opposition into a spontaneous enthusiasm of admiration; and he had the satisfaction of placing the crown upon the brow of his beloved Barbara. Surely, a simple narrative of this fact, without any comment or embellishment, answers our present purpose—perhaps it may gain an additional interest if placed by the side of the tragical scenes of the court of Henry VIII., or that of the gallantries of Francis I. Suffice it to say, that Poland was evidently in advance of every other country in political and moral development, and that the two Sigismunds in particular were the finest specimens of what the character of kings should be.

Under their auspicious reign the intellectual activity of Poland was also immense. She largely contributed to the common stock of human knowledge. Every branch of literature and science had its eminent votaries. Consequently, in the same manner as the Italians cling with enthusiasm and affection to the times of Dante and Petrarch—or, as the English are proud of the Shaksperean period—the Poles, with mixed feelings of both, cherish the era of the two Sigismunds. As a mark of honorable distinction, it is called in the history of literature a golden era, to which appellation it acquired the unquestionable right. But its chief merit consisted in the emancipation of Polish literature from the Latin frame, the latter language having been hitherto generally used by the learned. It was a welcome change, that produced a complete revolution in taste, sentiment, and ideas;

at the same time, it spurred on the expansion of intelligence. No one can doubt, that the adoption of the Latin tongue as the only vehicle for communicating all superior thoughts, has done immense injury to the progress of national literature in every country. Those, therefore, who first had the courage to break down the monopoly of the few, and disclosed the charms of mental cultivation to the mass of their fellow-countrymen in the vernacular language, may be looked upon as benefactors of their race. On that account, the memory of Luther, among the Germans, is not only venerated as the boldest champion of the Reformation, but also as the founder of a German language.

In Poland, this honor belongs to John Kochanowski, a man of uncommon genius and of brilliant intellectual versatility. As the translator of Homer, Anacreon, Horace, and Cicero, he would already be entitled to the gratitude of posterity for so important a contribution of ancient lore; but the energy of his mind and feeling is eminently distinguished in the translation of the Psalms of David. He was deeply imbued with the inspirations of the original, and has transfused the sublime ideas of the royal bard into his native language, with all their peculiar fire and strength. In his original works he maintains throughout the character of the independent genius, and, without a national model, he of himself formed a poetical language, and has henceforth become a standard for others. His volume of 'Laments,' written on the occasion of the death of his only daughter, Urshula, possesses great interest and merit, from the wonderful variety of thought and expression upon the same subject, without

the least monotony, in pathos that forcibly portrays the anguish of parental bereavement. I presume it will be gratifying to my readers to peruse the following one of these 'Laments,' as an illustration of his mind.

LAMENT.

(TRANSLATED BY DR. BOWRING.)

'Would thou hadst ne'er been born—or, being born,
Hadst left me not, sweet infant! thus forlorn.
I have paid lasting woe for fleeting bliss,
A dark farewell, a speechless pang like this.
Thou wert the brightest, fairest dream of sleep!
And, as the miser cherishes his heap
Of gold, I held thee; soon 'twas fled, and nought
Left but the dreary vacancies of thought
That once was blessedness! And thou art fled,
Whose fairy vision floated in my head
And play'd around my heart. And thou art gone!
Gone with my joys, and I am left alone.
Half of my soul took flight with thee, the rest
Clings to thy broken shadow in my breast!'

Who would not mingle a sigh of deep sympathy with the sorrow of the poet, and thus pay a tribute both to his talent and to his affection? This is the best triumph, to which real genius only can lay claim. Such was John Kochanowski.

There is a long list of eminent literati who flourished at the same time. My object, however, is not to examine them separately, and a mere mention of names would be tedious and unsatisfactory. I may say, that in every department of intellectual exercise the Poles were preëminently successful. Their zeal was particularly great in the study of the mathematical

and physical sciences. In that province, men of a bold and original cast of mind raised themselves to the high rank of those few luminaries of the world whom the whole human race claim as the common glory of human nature.

Poland had the honor, in the sixteenth century, of possessing one of such illustrious character, whose name now is in the mouth of every schoolboy in the civilised world, who has received his quantum of geography, and been initiated in the elements of the solar system. The name of Copernicus sheds as great a lustre upon the country of his birth, as Kepler, Galileo, or Newton, do upon their respective native lands. Whatever, therefore, relates to the memory of Copernicus, should be sustained by a Pole with all the warmth of national jealousy and pride. The Germans, envious of his superior mind, endeavored lately to appropriate the honor of his origin to themselves, upon no other ground but upon that one of Thorn, the place of his birth, forgetting that Thorn (Torun in Polish) was in former times an integral part of Poland, and only after her second spoliation, in 1793, it became a portion of the present kingdom of Prussia. This dispute, however, set all parties in search of necessary documents, and it was fully proved that the father of Copernicus was a citizen of Cracow, that in 1469 he took up his residence at Thorn, and that four years after—that is to say, in 1473—his son, the subject of our present remarks, was born in it, who has overturned, by the powers of his great mind alone, all the previous systems of astronomy. He finished his studies at the University of Cracow. He employed himself with unremitting earnestness in examining the

observations of the ancients, and in making new ones of his own. When we consider that all his observations were made without the assistance of telescopes, the invention of these being of a later date, we cannot but agree, that the Polish philosopher must have been endowed with extraordinary mental powers, that enabled him to make such profound discoveries, and bring to light the works of nature hidden in the depth of infinity. Well may Poland be proud of him as one that had furnished a column of her grandeur. She can exclaim, without offending the feelings of modesty, in the poetic language of Dr. Worthington :

‘Enthroned with Newton in the starry spheres,
Copernicus unfolds to listening ears
The wondrous laws which Nature bared to him,
And but for him to Newton e'en were dim.
Thus Polish glory blends with God's own might,
And lives in regions of eternal light.’

There is a rich fund of recollections in the annals of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, calculated to gratify and strengthen the intellectual habits of comparison and contemplation of a student of history. Some are of a brilliant character, others less dazzling, but no less interesting or important in their effects. Perhaps the pages of the Polish annals may be consigned to the latter classification. But if daring has not characterised her ideas, in its stead their genial vitality has spread widely, and nourished sentiments, which add dignity to the common course of human existence, and give a noble expression to nationality.

Thus, she cannot rival the grandeur of the Portuguese, actively displayed in the maritime enterprises that led to the most beneficial improvements in naviga-

tion, and enlarged the wealth of knowledge and of commerce. Nor can she compete with the good fortune of Spain, into whose lap were thrown immense acquisitions, with mines of treasures. However, neither of these nations reaped the benefit of internal moral and social improvement, from a spirit called into existence by the love of the marvellous, or of adventures. The genius of Don Henry of Portugal, and that of Columbus, might well have blushed at the fatal consequences conjured up by their noble aspirations. The worst passions started up tumultuously, in direct opposition to the spirit of their gigantic conceptions. Avarice and cupidity, whilst stimulating the growth of energies, destroyed in the same proportion the higher attributes of humanity—the sentiments of justice and of freedom. Abroad, wherever they succeeded in maintaining a footing, they were the heralds of calamity and oppression, whilst they sunk, in their turn at home, into a deluge of vice, that made them fit to bear the degradation of slavery.

Such reflections do not fall upon Poland. Her account of herself would rather be viewed favorably by the tribunal of nations. On the other hand, if Germany can point with exultation to the greatness of her idea, personified by the Reformation, and may justly plead apology for the series of violent struggles it kindled, especially as the result obtained—freedom of thought—was worth every sacrifice, to this Poland can return an answer: ‘You contended for freedom of thought, and I gave shelter to the persecuted.’ In such a light of comparison she stands in reference to her contemporaries. In summing up all the parts of the character of Poland of the Second

Period, no one would deny that the Poles have strong ground to cherish it with more than common attachment or gratification; and if the recollections keep up unquenched the mighty workings of our passions—as long as the Poles cling with tenacity to the memory of their ancestors, and nourish their spirit, it will be impossible for any despot, or combination of despots, to reduce them to a forgetfulness of their ancient dignity, or extinguish their love of national independence. The subsequent events will fully illustrate the truth of it. In the meantime, one observation will be still added: that Poland closed her Second Period of History with a prospect justifying the most brilliant anticipations of her future greatness.

The Third Period.

ELECTIVE MONARCHY.

A.D. 1573 TO A.D. 1764.

THE commencement of the Third Period of Poland's political career, was a beautiful continuation of her conduct, regulated by the expansion of liberal ideas. At no time were her considerations marked with so much wisdom, with such elevated sentiments, as when she found herself called upon to dispose of the vacant throne after the death of Sigismund Augustus, the last scion of the Jagiellonian race.

The first object of the general anxiety was to settle the principles which should be in future the basis, and the absolute condition, of a reigning monarch; that would also promote universal harmony in spite of the difference, especially of religious opinions, then making fast progress in the country. In 1573, the Diet, to its great honor, proclaimed civil and religious liberty. It was an act, a splendid emanation of the genius and tendency of Polish society. Such a sublime thought was as yet beyond the conception of the christian world. This sole fact would suggest to every mind

a train of agreeable reflections in the face of the most delicate and long established interests, prejudices, and the newly-started pretensions; notwithstanding the contact of such combustible materials, it was jointly agreed to respect the rights and freedom of each as the common boon of all. What still more enhances the value of the manifestation of such a spirit, is that it was not the work of one masterly mind, which in many cases forces the multitude to receive the stamp of its own thought and sentiment; but the accomplishment of collective exertions that personified a wide distribution of intelligence.

Yet, by the side of an act of so great magnanimity, the same collective mind, actuated by jealousy and fear that their privileges should ever be encroached upon by the crown, had entailed upon the country a succession of miseries by the ill devised system of elective monarchy. It was unanimously declared that the kings had only life interest in the crown; that any nobleman might be chosen by a vote of a majority of electors; that they could not be invested with the dignity and power of a chief of the State until they signed certain stipulations between the nation and themselves, known by the name of *pacta conventa*, which, if they dared to violate, the law absolved the nation from all the duties of allegiance. Doubtless, a crowd of candidates of foreign monarchs and princes sueing for the suffrage was an imposing sight, a flattering homage to the right of popular will.

At the first election, John III., King of Sweden; Ivan the Terrible, the Czar of Moscow; Archduke Ernest, the son of the Emperor Maximilian II.; and Henry of Valois, brother of Charles IX., King of

France, strove to gain the good opinion of the electors each through their Ambassadors making an exposition of their views, sacrifices, pledges, and brilliant promises which they never meant to perform. There is no denying that similar scenes exercised some influence, though transitory, upon the minds grown in the habits of arbitrary domination, and good results have been obtained. Thus, Henry of Valois, the first elected king of Poland, the son of the artful, haughty, and unprincipled Catharine de Medici, was obliged to subscribe the conditions which compelled him, for the sake of giving a good look to his sincerity with regard to his new subjects, to induce the French Government to relax its persecution of the Huguenots. Therefore, through the influence and interference of Poland, the Protestants in France had a respite from the harassing sufferings of oppression. Even Ivan the Terrible, the Czar of Moscow, who filled the world with an echo of the darkest atrocities, feigned to have a longing for the honor of governing a free people, and thought it necessary to palliate his barbarities in a language that betrayed the consciousness of the tyrant of the guilt with which he has been charged. But this acknowledgment of the purity of principle upon which the throne of Poland was placed may be looked upon as a poor return for the enormous evil that the competition of foreign princes caused to take root in the country. It is a matter of astonishment that the nation, so much attached to its nationality, should have betrayed so little solicitude for the preservation of its native spirit from the contagion of corruption, easily spread by a promiscuous crowd of foreign adventurers. Let us only

consider the elements of which the first election was composed.

Four influences, each distinct in their character, animated by different circumstances, and neither of them having the least sympathy with a nation at whose hands they sought to receive the object of their ambition, found themselves face to face, trying to out-trick each other by the most liberal professions, which they never meant to put into practice. Such a mixture of cunning, intrigue, of unscrupulous falsehood, of alluring tamperings, would have thrown into confusion even the harmony of a grave assembly of sages. Well might it leave a dangerous effect upon the multitude, easily split by kindled passions or prospects of recompense. However, the high testimony of Montluc, the Bishop of Valens, Ambassador of France, who took the most active part in the proceedings of the first election, as well as of Gratiani, Secretary to the Cardinal Commendoni, who, in the name of Gregory XIII., supported the candidature of the Archduke Ernest of Austria, both concur in admiring the majesty of the national spirit, equal to the grandeur of the occasion. It was the spirit of the Jagiellonian times, still genuine in its native purity and aspirations. But even then we might have easily discovered signs, as yet imperceptible, of its decline, to be developed by a repetition of similar scenes of excitements, so prejudicial to the general equanimity, especially as the viciousness of the Elective system was allowed to grow without any provision that could check the irregularities of restless ambition. The whole proceedings, though of a solemn nature, were not sustained by laws strong enough or capable of

restricting within legitimate bounds the actions of selfishness. Hence, the majesty of the national assembly, which, intended to represent the intelligence and integrity of the country, was casually sullied by a discord of contending passions.

In addition to this mischievous deficiency in the arrangement and regulations of such momentous occasions, another evil sprung up of a more serious character, that preyed upon the vitality of national energies. The elected king and the nation were far from being united in one bond of fellowship for the mutual benefit. Their interests stood at variance with each other. The former cherished a wish of framing the regal on the model of hereditary absolutism. Accordingly, his inclinations led him to enter into secret negotiations, thus paving the way to the growth of foreign influence in his Council. The latter had often strong reasons to suspect or distrust their own ruler, and that want of harmony in the tendencies of both brought on an accumulation of political misfortunes that darkened the subsequent career of the country. Again, as the choice generally fell upon a foreign prince, the elected king, being a stranger to its language, a stranger to its historical recollections, to its manners, habits, or prejudices, to its national literature, and, above all, a stranger to its spirit, what interest could he feel in any of these legacies transmitted from generation to generation? Hence, new sentiments, new ideas, incompatible with the cast of a Polish mind, have been imported, planted, multiplied, and artificially sustained, to the great detriment of the native ones. It was an injury —the most grievous injury — from the fatal effects

of which Poland required the mightiest exertions to recover herself.

No wonder that the concurrence of such circumstances became a source of successive calamities. Under the pressure of causes so ruinous, unfortunately, the nation was ill provided with the means of counter-poising their melancholy effect. The Diet, the only channel through which a desired redress might have been obtained, met once every two years, emergencies excepted, whilst the duration of their sittings was limited to six weeks only. During so short a space of time, scarcely a few questions of importance could receive any attention or ample consideration; all was hurry and confusion; the details of business, often without any inquiry, were left to the ability of the executive power. It is, therefore, evident that a strong opposition could readily start to a subject of vast concern, if it proved to be offensive to the general interest. But in other respects the control exercised over the acts of the Government was altogether feeble. In consequence, this neglect became a source of encouragement to the Crown to follow its own plans, without the consent or knowledge of the country. This want of unity in action and in purpose between the ruler and the ruled, caused a weakness in the bond of political organisation.

There was another inconvenience that gave rise to great abuses, which rendered the progress of improvements difficult. Unanimity was required in parliamentary decisions—a single dissenting voice could arrest the enactment of the most salutary measure—nay, it might suspend or dissolve the proceedings of the Diet. It may well startle with surprise those

unacquainted with the genius of Polish society, that such extraordinary importance should have been attached to individuality, as to arm each member of the Diet with the mighty privilege of *Liberum Veto*. Doubtless, the original spirit of that conception was perfectly consonant with the sentiments and notions of those whom it concerned. Educated to prize personal liberty as the noblest gift of Heaven, and as the highest social distinction, the equestrian order, or nobles, put the greatest stress in maintaining that dignity, and as all had equal share in the enjoyment of it, each was entrusted with the guardianship in virtue of their legitimate right over the common interest. It was very likely adopted as a principle of self-defence against any machination or design of encroachment on the part of the executive power. The purity of their intentions cannot be called into question. However, they may be taxed with having had very little insight into human nature, as not to have entertained fears and apprehensions that the same privilege might, also, become one day the channel of treachery or misapplication. It seems as if, under the enchantment of a love of liberty, their thoughts did not see the dark side of eventful life. But subsequent experience shook off the spell, although not until reverses reached their highest climax.

Such were the features of the Elective system, full of bold character, yet wanting a finish, and defective in details. It stood in need of a master-mind to sort out the good from the evil, and to direct the helm with a firm hand. Had it been the good fortune of Poland to be governed by several Kings in

succession, similar in spirit and genius to Stephen Batory, or if the reign of Batory was of a longer duration than the short period of ten years, she would have become great, free, and glorious. That illustrious monarch possessed the abilities of a consummate statesman and of an eminent warrior. But what is of still greater importance, he understood the character of the nation, made the best use of its energies, gained its confidence, and taught it to respect the law. His eagle eye discerned in the distance the growing foe, who one day would prove the deadliest antagonist to the progress of civilisation and freedom—that Poland, as the vanguard of this very cause, would have to grapple with him, either to purchase dearly a triumph, or first to fall a victim to his rapacity. There was no hesitation on the part of King Batory as to the adoption of a vast plan, having for its object to crush at once the rising enemy, whose aggressive intentions have already been betrayed by the repeated invasions and struggles for supremacy over the lands close to his frontiers—the Czar of Moscow, Ivan the Terrible, that incarnation of arbitrary will and power, the very type of Mongulic spirit, whose sanguinary deeds suggested to an English poet the following characteristic lines :

‘His throne was made of human skulls,
And all around his seat
Towns burned—and hecatombs of men
Lay slaughtered at his feet.’

He had more than once provoked, by his wondrous depredations, the vengeance of the Poles. Stephen Batory felt the necessity of straining every nerve for the destruction of such a fiend. High political con-

siderations, and the best interest of civilisation, prompted him to employ the most energetic measures in order to secure success to the undertaking. War was carried on with the utmost vigor, and in all encounters, the superiority of the Polish arms brilliantly prevailed. The defeated Czar sought his safety in bringing to his aid the influence of the head of the Romish Church, whom he ensnared with the promise of submitting the Greek Church to his authority, provided he, by his interference, stopped the progress of the victories of the Polish king. At all times the Czar of Moscow made a practice of the very maxim, the discovery of which we are now in the habit of unjustly ascribing to the wisdom of Talleyrand, 'That man has been endowed with language for the purpose that his thoughts may be the better concealed.' Cunning, treachery, and falsehood were as assiduously veiled with professions of piety, earnestness, and attachment to good, by Ivan the Terrible, as by the Czar Nicholas in our days. Yet, the nature of Czarism may have a claim to immutability. Whether we look upon it emerging into existence in the remote rude times, or in the midst of a dazzling appearance of the civilisation of our days, it is one and the same evil genius. But we are aware that insinuations of evil possess oftentimes a spell that deceives the credulous, and imposes upon the innocent. The whole successful career of Czarism may be traced to these fraudulent insinuations. Thus, Ivan the Terrible, in the hour of danger and difficulty, feigned contrition, humility, and held out a temptation to the Pope of a recognition of his supremacy by the Muscovite Church, in order to extricate himself from a desperate position by his

assistance. The *ruse* succeeded well—the good office of the Church of Rome had a share in stopping the development of further hostilities. Peace was concluded in 1580. It was a peace advantageous to Poland; but, nevertheless, Czarism was saved, with all the means at his disposal—crouching low, that it might leap the better, like a beast of prey, as soon as the object of its mark should be off its guard. However, if the Pope had so little penetration, and allowed himself to be drawn into a snare by the prospect of a magnificent prize, King Batory was wide-awake, and cherished fondly his original plan of destroying the enemy of Poland. Accordingly, he began to make vast preparations in anticipation of future events. But in the midst of active exertions, and most useful measures, he was suddenly removed from this world by death. His memory history has inscribed as illustrious, not only among the warriors, but also among the patrons of learning. He founded the University at Wilno, the capital of Lithuania, and multiplied the means of instruction by the establishment of several schools. He testified his deep interest in the progress of general intelligence, by regular attendance at the yearly public examinations of the scholars, whom he was in the habit of encouraging in a familiar manner to earnest application. In short, the reign of Batory, in every point, may still be considered as the continuation of the flourishing era of the Jagiellonian period. Improvement in the internal administration had been introduced—intellectual activity had its free and full scope—the whole aspect of the State bespoke strength and majesty—its dominions extended from the Baltic Sea to the Dnieper, from the

Dwina to the Carpathian mountains and Silisia. The Dukes of Prussia and of Courland, the Hozpodars of Wallachia and Moldavia, were its vassals. Such was Poland at the death of Batory. And yet, the gigantic energies of the country, with its immense resources, in the hands of the successive kings, did not bring forth a single advantage; not so much because they were weak princes, as because they were bad administrators.

Henceforth, Poland, as if turned back from a broad road, which would have rendered the prosecution of her career successful, was gradually driven into a narrow path, the inconvenience of which produced feverish excitement, and in the end brought on exhaustion of her mighty frame. But even in her decline she had brilliant moments of native inspiration, that might have been mistaken for symptoms bespeaking a recovery of health. However, complete inattention to judicial remedies aggravated the disorder, whilst the king and the nation were constantly at variance in the pursuit of their object.

The reign of Sigismund III., the son of John, King of Sweden, which comprised an interval of forty-five years, that is, from 1587 to 1632, was rich in events, exhibiting, on the one hand, the fulness of mature strength of the nation; and, on the other hand, the indolence of a prince, covetous indeed to grasp at arbitrary power, but possessing little talent for captivating the affection even of those who surrounded him. Obstinate and mean jealousy were the two leading features of his character. Studying only his own aggrandisement, he was constantly forming new projects, without ever turning to advantage many favorable

circumstances which presented themselves to him. His impolitic conduct frustrated the richest fruit of victories gained by the Poles over the Tartars, Turks, Swedes, and Muscovites. It was a period of glory and misfortunes for Poland. A great number of eminent men, distinguished both for civic and military talents, appeared on the active stage of her life. Her warlike genius was nobly represented by Charles Chodkiewicz, John Zamoyski, Zolkiewski, Kouicepolski, whose feats of arms spread the celebrity of the Polish valor beyond the boundaries of Europe. But all their zeal and exertions, though they were successful in humbling their different enemies, could never rouse to action the dull supineness of the king, or give a dignified direction to the perverseness of his views and intentions. Thus, the splendid victory of Charles Chodkiewicz, in A.D. 1603, at the head of a small corps of about four thousand men, over a Swedish army, consisting of ten thousand of infantry, supported by four thousand cavalry, near Kirnholm, in the neighborhood of Riga, instead of being vigorously followed up and brought to an end advantageous to Poland, was finished merely by an armistice for fourteen months. Wherever the news of this victory reached, it was received with astonishment and admiration, so much so, that we find James I., of England, the Emperor Rudolphus, Ahmed the Sultan, and Shah Abbar of Persia, sending their congratulations to the Polish King on the occasion. Again, another incident took place, which a Batory would have known how to appreciate, and turn to the best advantage. The Czardom of Moscow fell a prey to alternate usurpations and impostures.

Through a combination of circumstances, the interference of Poland became a matter of necessity. Zolkiewski, at the head of a small band, carried off every opposition, and to his victorious arms Moscow surrendered. The usurper, Czar Shooyski, with his two brothers, were taken prisoners, and the inhabitants proclaimed Wladyslaw, the son of Sigismund III., as their Czar, in A.D. 1610. It was an event of extraordinary magnitude. Good fortune, as if knowing the meanness of the spirit, and the mediocrity of the understanding, of the Polish king, upon whom she lavished her favors, seems to have paved the way to an easy realisation of grandeur without much trouble or sacrifice. The Rurik dynasty was extinct; the usurpers—one was dead, others defeated or made prisoners; whilst Moscow unanimously demanded for a Polish prince, Wladyslaw, to be their Czar. But Sigismund, envious of the elevation of his own son, or, through fears, inspired by bigotry, that he might be obliged to renounce the Romish Church, and become a member of the Greek religion, had recurrence to procrastination, to false promises, to unworthy shiftings, until the long regency began to be wearisome both to Zolkiewski and to the Muscovites. The Polish general, in order to conceal better his disappointment, under a plausible pretext of going to hasten the long deferred departure from Warsaw of the Polish prince, left Moscow, accompanied by the prisoners, the Czar Shooyski, and his two brothers. The Poles were then spectators of a sight known only to the ancient Romans. The victorious Zolkiewski made a triumphant entry into Warsaw in an elevated carriage, with the Dukes of Moscow by his side. He presented them to the Diet,

and in the speech he made on the occasion, without any affectation or feigned modesty, he rather lamented, in a manly manner, the melancholy fate of his illustrious prisoners, than flattered his ambition. But neither the excitement of so dazzling a scene, nor the enthusiasm of the multitude, could brighten his brow, overcast with profound grief. The hollowness of all pageantry made him feel stronger the loss of the substance, which now it was endeavored to substitute by a gaudy shadow. Instead of rejoicings, a mournful procession would have been better adapted to represent the deep concern of the nation in the want of steadiness of purpose in the king, who was only obedient to the impulses of blind selfishness. In vain Zolkiewski tried with urgent remonstrances to gain his point, Sigismund still sported in delays. At last the Muscovites put an end to suspense and further vacillation by having proclaimed Michael Romanow, the founder of the present reigning dynasty, for their sovereign in 1613.

Thus, the golden opportunity of attaching Moscow to western civilisation was allowed to slip out of the hands of Poland. It is idle to speculate now what the result might have been, if the dynasty of a Polish prince presided over its career. In all probability, the Mongul spirit, which still gives to its character an expression of barbarism, would have undergone a modification, or rather, a complete transformation, by the contact with liberal Polish ideas. But, in the absence of this, experience has shown, that the old Muscovite spirit, even under the most favorable circumstances, had preserved one and the same nature of aggressive tendency, trampling upon

the best interests of humanity, until it grew in our days into a monster, threatening to swallow up the whole fabric of western civilisation, for the safety of which colossal sacrifices are now made by the combined resources of Great Britain and France. No doubt, the elevation of Romanow to the Czardom of Moscow was a herald, especially to Poland, of future struggles and bitter animosities. Yet Sigismund felt no uneasiness upon this subject; his ways of judgment were not formed upon the habit of earnest observation with regard to probable effects produced by certain causes. There was no other desire in his mind, save the gratification of his own will, and that will even had no derivation from any noble sentiment.

Through the same inaptitude for steady and energetic exertions, Sigismund lost the Swedish crown, to which he had an hereditary right. During two campaigns, conducted with great ability and glory to the Polish arms, although signal victories were obtained, he showed a particular talent for wasting favorable opportunities and neutralising advantages. On the other hand, his strong attachment to the Romish Church placed him in direct opposition to the sympathies of the Swedish people, and, consequently, multiplied the difficulties which he had no courage to face; nor could the influence of his hereditary right to the Swedish crown inspire him with heroic devotedness equal to the greatness of the cause. In the end, he had to resign his birthright in favor of his uncle Charles, the Duke of Sudermania.

But the losses of foreign crowns would have been of minor importance to Poland, had Sigismund directed

all his attention to her internal ameliorations—had he identified himself with measures conducive to general prosperity. Instead of this, maladministration in every department was daily inflicting new injuries—neither national prejudices, habits, nor laws, were held by him in respect. Bigotry alone, of the darkest hue, regulated his sentiments and his judgment. Hence, the pernicious influence of Jesuits became the evil genius in his council, who set a hatchet at the root of the noblest institutions. Religious liberty—a privilege the most momentous in social organisation, the very personification of the healthiest condition of the sentiment of society, and of its finest judgment, to which Poland manifested an early attachment, was the first to suffer. Strange alterations took place in the whole aspect of her physiognomy. The calm, majestic, and serene look, which she alone had preserved during the dawn of the Reformation, now began to exhibit feverish uneasiness and uncharitable feeling towards dissenting opinions. The precipitate rashness of such a step caused a large number to prefer emigrating rather than to submit to the forfeiture of liberty of conscience.

This infringement, however, upon religious freedom should be solely ascribed to the arbitrary disposition of the king, supported by a fraction of church dignitaries. It was in opposition to national institutions. In consequence, the country was agitated with growing discontent. The nation had daily new reasons for complaining against abuses. At last, its indignation burst into a strong opposition, and was followed by an instance, as extraordinary as novel, the king standing a delinquent, and the nation his accusers

and his judges. It was assuredly a spectacle of peculiar interest. Without approaching in character to any sudden revolution, it had a threatening appearance, full of excitement, seriousness, and gravity. The nation was roused to the recollection of its rights by maladministration, and the unlawful conduct of the king. Conspiracy or rebellion are generally the results of oppression, and made use of when better weapons are not within the reach. But Poland still enjoyed political advantages. Freedom of speech, a privilege of which now Great Britain alone in Europe can boast, was then in full force among the Poles. They had, therefore, recurrence to that privilege, and in an open manner called upon the King to vindicate himself in the senate, as their highest tribunal. On this occasion John Zamoyski, one of the most eminent characters of the age, in answer to the haughty language of Sigismund, gave the following bold warning : ‘Caveas, ne te Caium Cæsarem et nos Marcus Brutus posteritas appellavit.’ [‘Beware that posterity should not call thee Caius Cæsar, and us Marcus Brutus.’]

This demonstration of the exasperated spirit of the country was not followed by any act of violence. On the contrary, no sooner had the king made an acknowledgment of his errors, and promised to pay careful attention to the general welfare, than the angry feeling was disarmed, and the nation, satisfied with the homage done to the importance of its individuality, returned to their homes, without bestowing a thought upon the necessity of making any provision that would strike at the root of evils. There was a complete want of a systematic, vigilant, and active opposition, alive to its high duties of ever pushing

forward the progress of improvements calculated to strengthen the harmony and safety of the State. The maxim, that 'Prevention is often better than cure,' was not familiar to the minds of the Poles. It seems that the sentiment of individuality was the strongest, and all, as one, felt the same attachment to liberty; on account of which self-reliance and self-confidence received undue development, at the sacrifice of prudence and forethought in the arrangement of public proceedings.

With such a disposition, no wonder that a wider relaxation in the bond of political unity subsequently hurried the State into complete prostration. The fearful realisation of this took place during the successive reigns of the two sons of Sigismund Vasa, namely, Wladyslaw and John Casimir. In justice to the memory of Wladyslaw, history gives him high credit for talent, personal bravery, and a capacious mind, fit to conceive and execute vast projects. But the vicious spirit of the long reign of his father, Sigismund Vasa, had so deeply wormed itself into the body of the country, that he had to grapple with the external and internal difficulties. With regard to the former, he confronted them with suitable energy, and conducted in person a successful campaign against Czar Michael Romanow, whom he compelled to sue for peace. It was concluded at Polanow in 1634, in virtue of which Wladyslaw cancelled his claim to the Muscovite crown, founded legally upon the act of his election in 1610 to the sovereignty of Moscow, whilst the recognised Czar, Michael, renounced every pretension to Livonia, Esthonia, Courland, Smolensk, Siewierz, and Tchernichow. On the other hand, a

formidable invasion of the Tartars met also with a total defeat. Thus, respect for the superiority of the Polish arms was still enforced abroad.

But a fearful domestic calamity, the rebellion of the Cossacks, broke out, that announced the pressure of a grievous wrong, the fruit of the unwise policy and false spirit of the fatally long reign of Sigismund Vasa. The Cossacks of Ukraine, characteristic in their origin, rise, and progress, a brotherhood of wild liberty and daring, were organised into a regular border militia, against the incursions of the Tartars, by that great monarch Stephen Batory, who attached to them due importance. Their religion (that of the Greek Church) and their habits of life had the fullest consideration. Unfortunately, they were now sadly offended in both their sentiments of religion and freedom. It is true, that their lawless practices spread often consternation to the very gates of Constantinople, without the knowledge of the State, and, in consequence, compromised the good understanding between Poland and the Ottoman Empire. Some restriction upon their conduct became an absolute necessity. The Diet, however, in 1638, acted with impolitic rashness, by the promulgation of a sweeping measure, depriving them of their privileges, which singularly upheld their individuality, whilst bigotry made the worst use of its rising ascendancy. In addition to this, the execution of their chief, Pauluk, roused to the highest pitch their indignation. The thirst for a terrible revenge sought to quench itself in rivers of blood. The veil fell down, disclosing the painful reality of a threatening decline, with which the unity and strength of the State was attacked.

The sagacious mind of Wladyslaw saw clearly the full extent of the danger. He entertained the most serious anxiety to avert it, by the application of a timely and judicious remedy. But in the midst of vast schemes and projects, he was prematurely removed by death, to the deep sorrow of the country. His eyes were closed when Poland stood most in need of an energetic ruler. The storm burst on all sides in a terrific manner. The intrepid, the bold chief of the Cossacks, Chmielnicki, spread devastation and carnage. At his instigation, the numerous hordes of Tartars, inured to predatory practices, gladly rushed, eager of booty, adding to plunder all the horrors of every crime. In this emergency, the Poles called John Casimir, brother of the late king, to fill the vacant throne. It was not likely that a person, after having spent part of his life in the bosom of the peaceful profession of a high dignitary of the church, contracting all its sentiments and notions, zeal and partiality, would meet with suitable energy or spirit the multiplying difficulties. It was a period of continuous oscillation of fresh misfortunes; scarcely one was daunted, than another started up with a still greater fury. The Cossacks and the Tartars, had the coöperation of the Czar Alexis, whose protectorate, accepted by the former, proved in the end so fatal both to them and to Poland. In addition to these enemies, Charles Gustavus, king of Sweden, supported by the Elector of Brandeburgh, penetrated to the very heart of the country. Thus, myriads of vultures, from all sides at once, attacked one and the same victim.

Now, in the presence of so much danger, hope grew mute when the monstrous privilege of a *liberum veto*

began to thwart the efforts and transactions of the Diet. To contend against such a combination of evils would be a hard task for the mightiest frame. The State became a complete wreck. The king abandoned his country ; and, in a fit of despair, offered his crown to Austria, or any other potentate who would have the courage to rescue it from its perilous position. Not one listened to the voice of the temptation, so fearfully dark was the horizon of Poland. In this dilemma she found salvation in the re-kindled spirit of her own. The martial genius of Czarnecki proved a vigilant sentinel in the hour of her great distress, and he knew how to turn or improve every opportunity to her advantage. At last, the treaty of Oliwa, in 1660, and another of Andruszew, in 1667, composed the vicissitudes of ill-fortune. But this composition revealed a melancholy fact of material losses, as a preface to a solution of a sanguinary tragedy. The peace of Oliwa and Andruszew, both onerous and ominous, may be looked upon as two official seals, fixing the first stage of the decline of Poland. By the former she lost Livonia and Esthonia, ceded to the king of Sweden; by the latter, the Czar of Moscow took possession of Siewierz, Tchernichow, and a part of Ukraine. Constant reverses, constant cares and difficulties, would even prostrate the energies of a giant mind. No wonder, therefore, that the weak heart of John Casimir could no longer support their weight. The nation was summoned, to witness a solemn scene of abdication. According to the contemporary writers, the occasion was of the most affecting character. The farewell address of the king, delivered with tears, excited the deepest sorrow and regret in the loyal mind of the country. Some

efforts were employed to shake the king's intention; but, firm in his purpose, whilst he duly appreciated the generosity of national sentiment, and the sincerity of motives, he, at the same time, beautifully revealed the magnanimity of his own anxieties, by urging upon the Poles the necessity of a better organisation, in default of which, the State, at no distant period, may fall a victim to the rapacity of its hostile neighbors.

This warning, uttered by the royal lips, and at the serious moment when taking leave of the nation over whom he ruled, remains an honorable monument to the memory of the good understanding of John Casimir. However, the Poles were not as yet sufficiently mature in political judgment, to act in harmony with the spirit of the admonition. More attached to liberty as an individual privilege, than a principle regulating selfishness for the benefit of society, they sported with the gravest moments agreeably to impulse or fancy. No matter that grievances and disorder were accumulating in a threatening manner, or that the safety of the country stood in need of a sagacious guide, whose genius might rekindle the fire of national ideas smouldering under the ashes of successive misfortunes. Though merit, superiority of mind, and martial spirit, united together, should have received their special consideration in the choice of a new king—particularly after having witnessed so disastrous a reign, calculated to render them more solicitous to avoid a repetition of a similar recurrence—nevertheless, under the pressure of a whim, the choice fell upon an obscure individual, humble in circumstances, but a descendant of a princely house, as if to aver the principle that every nobleman was a candidate for the crown. Be it what it may, the

selection was imprudent, and injurious to the dignity as well as to the interest of the nation, because the object of such popular favor, was, both in talent and in character, a mere mediocrity.

Fortunately, the reign of Michael Wishniowiecki lasted but a few years, though long enough for converting the bad into worse. To him succeeded a splendid meteor that shot across the darkness, and made Poland once again to shed a light, the brightness of which became the theme of universal admiration. John Sobieski, a fine specimen of military genius, several times had an opportunity of making his talent shine by the repeated defeats of the Turks and Tartars, who then sustained their invasions with a ferocious spirit. The grateful nation for once followed the dictates of its national sentiments by giving preference to him over a crowd of competitors. It was a triumph of merit, to the great credit of the judgment of the electors. Yet a great warrior may prove an indifferent administrator. Everything was done by him to render the name of Poland glorious and renowned abroad; but not a single measure was adopted to relieve the country bending under a weight of grievances. His memory has a strong claim to the gratitude of Christendom, and, in particular, of the House of Austria, whilst Poland, to her deep sorrow, is obliged to add to it a mixture of reproaches for having been too lavish of the blood of her sons in defending the interest of others to the detriment of her own.

Doubtless, the battle of Vienna, fought in 1683, gathered immense advantages in the train of victory. The aggressive Ottoman power was broken, the German Empire rescued from the imminent danger of passing

under the Turkish yoke, and, above all, the independence of Christianity was saved. Hence, Sobieski well earned the honorable appellation of the hero of the times, or the hero of Christendom. The importance of this achievement had universal acknowledgment by thanksgiving in every Christian church, and the ministers of religion deemed it not profane to repeat on the occasion the solemn words, ‘There was a man sent down from heaven, and his name was John.’ Certainly, in the grandeur of the result, the battle of Vienna scarcely has an equal. Charles Martel, in 732, checked the victorious career of the Moors at the battle of Tours, and thus imposed the limits to the hitherto successful march of Mahometanism; but the battle of Vienna inflicted a deep wound on its vitality, from the effects of which it was not able to rally and recover its original strength.

Yet, in the midst of such colossal advantages, Poland had no particular share in the benefits. On the contrary, she was cheated in every expectation, even as to the accommodation of winter-quarters for her troops. John Sobieski was easily duped by the treacherous duplicity of the court of Vienna. A good soldier, but a bad politician, he was a constant victim to its intrigues. Credulous in listening to its flattering suggestions, he entered upon schemes which involved him in unnecessary wars and disasters. In short, his reign, dazzling in the military annals, exhibits a painful contrast in the department of civil administration, not so much on account of the want of ability or good intentions, as in consequence of the singleness of idea, to which his mind clung with tenacity, to the great prejudice of his better judgment.

Hence, if we were collecting illustrations of the chivalrous spirit, the life of Sobieski could furnish numerous instances of the beautiful and sublime in sentiment and conduct. The country at large did not remain passive to the influence of his example, and woman also caught the inspiration of devotedness to the high duties of the country's cause. The following occurrence may be interesting to my readers.

During one of the incursions of the Tartars, in conjunction with the Turks, they laid siege to the castle of Trembowla, which was defended by a small band under the command of Chrzanowski. The situation of the besieged was daily becoming worse, as numerous hordes of the enemy encompassed them on all sides, cutting off communication with the country. Want of ammunition and provision began to alarm the Poles, the more so as the prospect of relief was uncertain. In so critical a moment a council of war was held, and the opinion canvassed seems to have been unanimous that the danger could only be averted by capitulation. No sooner was the rumor of this hard necessity afloat than the wife of the commander hastened to the meeting of their deliberation, and, with a voice indicating resolution and superiority, 'Where is the man,' exclaimed she, 'that prefers ignominious submission to death in the cause of his native land?' Then, turning to her husband with the strongest affection in her look, 'Oh, husband!' said she, 'if fortitude forsakes you, and you have no more courage to defy the frowns of ill-fortune, I will not survive your shame; but, before you commit any act of meanness, this dagger shall pierce both your

heart and mine!' Here she lifted up her hand armed with the glittering steel. Her words, like a thunder bolt, struck the Members of the Council—a deep silence prevailed—but the time of transition from amazement to enthusiasm was quick, and, as one, they unanimously and spontaneously responded to her appeal, 'We shall die rather than surrender!' Hope reanimated the drooping spirit of the little band. They sallied out with success. In the meantime, John Sobieski approached with his main army, and thus the castle was saved by the patriotism* and fortitude of Madame Chrzanowski.

The individual cases of devotedness and heroism might be easily multiplied. They would all tend to prove that there was a spirit in the country—a lofty spirit of national independence. It was favorable to the development of military genius. If Sobieski, to his own military talent united the firmness of character and penetration of mind of Stephen Batory, with a nation of warriors he would have rendered his reign one of the most illustrious. But, although he felt the necessity of useful reforms, and showed occasionally a great deal of earnestness about it, want of tact, and too much eagerness for the private interest of his own family, placed him always in an awkward position, and paralysed the best intentions, whilst the intrigues of Austria, to whose counsels he had the weakness to listen and to trust, undermined public confidence. Thus, instead of improvements, a still greater confusion ensued. Even the Dietines, or meetings for taking cognisance of local interest, fell into disuse, as if the nation was losing all connection with the habits of the past, and from exhaustion sinking into a slumber.

The political disorganisation attained a still higher degree under the successive reign of Frederick Augustus II., the Elector of Saxony. The intimate friendship contracted by him with Peter the Czar of Moscow, may be said, in the language of superstition, to have been ominous. As a traveller across the African desert starts with gloomy forebodings and apprehensions at the sudden appearance of a vulture, whom popular notion endows with a foresight of the approaching end of its prey—so, that friendship may be looked upon in the same light. It was to Poland the appearance of a vulture heralding the approach of her days of mourning. The almost total absence of vigilance and constitutional control over the acts of the executive power, enabled the king, in imitation of the Czar of Moscow, to form schemes, gratifying to ambition, without the consent or even knowledge of the country. In consequence, it was surprised by the calamities of war, for which the king alone should be blamed. The kingdom of Sweden being left in an exhausted state to the youthful Charles XII., its dismemberment appeared to the Polish King and the Czar of Moscow politically an easy enterprize. But in their anticipations they were sadly disappointed. Charles XII., though very young, but possessing the uncommon energy of a warrior, hurried forward his small army with a rapidity that seemed to multiply its forces; fell upon the Russian camp, eighty thousand strong, stationed near Narva; and inaugurated the commencement of his military career by a total defeat of the enemy on November 30th, 1700. Thus, preceded by the reputation of a hero, he directed his steps towards Poland, and like a tempest swept before him every opposition. In a short time, he became the master and

the arbiter of her fate. As a victor, he held in no estimation the national rights; the word of command was the law, and the nation bowed to his bidding by its adherence to an act of dethronement of Frederick Augustus II., in whose place a candidate of his choice was elected, Stanislaus Leszczynski, in 1704. In every respect the new king was superior to his predecessor. Had he been called upon by the will of the nation, and at a more fortunate period, to that high position, doubtless his reign would have been a reign of great benefit. But, owing his elevation to the dictates of a fortunate warrior, this circumstance became a handle for opening the door to constant foreign interference with the exercise of the most sacred rights of a free country. The sequel has fully borne out this melancholy truth. Although, by the course of victories, Charles XII. compelled Frederick Augustus to resign officially the Polish crown in virtue of the treaty concluded at Alt-Ranstradt in 1706—yet, he no sooner met with reverses at the battle of Pultawa in 1709, than the dethroned king, backed by the Czar of Moscow, reentered Poland, and again took possession of her throne.

From this moment dates the ascendancy of the evil counsels of Moscow in the Polish cabinet. The nation, as if bewildered by the whirl of changes, seemed to have resigned the consciousness of its outraged dignity. It stood in need of repose at any price. Consequently, it evinced the most tractable spirit, even in lending its own hand, under a false notion, to commit self-mutilation, consenting to the enactment of a law limiting its standing army to the insignificant number of seventeen thousands. Peter of Moscow

was at the bottom of this suggestion. The nation was given to understand that by such an act the most effectual barrier would be raised against the encroachments of the crown, whilst the king was led to believe that, with a numerous army of so turbulent a people, no aspirations of his would ever succeed; instead of which, the Muscovite troops left in some parts of Poland might be available for his purpose.

But we have a still more extraordinary illustration of the means by the employment of which the Czar endeavored to conceal his sinister intentions. In contradiction to the very arbitrary power, proud of its hereditary rights, Peter feigned to profess the warmest interest for the preservation of the Polish republican privileges, courting the honorable appellation of a 'friend' or guardian of their inviolability. What a strange aspiration and still stranger anomaly—a Czar of Moscow playing the part of a hot-headed patriot of Poland! Such a farce was actually performed. Whenever the king showed the least anxiety to strengthen the political bond of internal organisation by any measure calculated to develope a chain of improvements based upon the principle of unity and order, the Muscovite influence, ever on the watch, fanned into a flame of opposition the republican party, whose suspicion was easily roused as to the tendency of innovations. In the same manner, being aware of the secret wishes of Frederick Augustus to render the Polish crown hereditary, in his own family, although they were united by the strongest ties of friendship, he spared no effort to thwart him in this object. First, every encouragement and stimulation was given to a discontent against the Saxon troops

quartered in Poland, and the general ferment grew to so high a pitch, that the king was compelled to withdraw them altogether from the country in 1712, whilst the Muscovite forces were suffered to remain, thus securing a commanding position for further intrigues.

Again: two curious pieces of the Muscovite diplomacy left attest the anxiety and fears of Peter, that Poland should not reconstitute her Government upon a solid basis. By one he bound Sweden, at the treaty of Aland, in 1718, and by the second he bound Turkey, at the treaty of Constantinople, in 1720, that they would jointly watch and prevent any alteration taking place in the Elective system of Poland. For what purpose did that solicitude spring up in the mind of a despot for a neighboring state, especially for its peculiar frame of government, so as to draw into a compact other foreign countries with the object of ensuring it its existence, even if the State itself, though independent, was desirous of making some changes? Certainly, there is a strong fellowship between the two evils, namely, despotism and anarchy. Upon the shoulders of anarchy despotism rears generally its triumphal arches. Unfortunately, the viciousness of the Polish institutions had a proneness to encourage the growth of anarchical spirit—precisely upon what the Czar of Moscow was building the hope of his future triumphs and greatness. Through the acquisition of Poland he could only rise to political importance in Europe. Hence, any amelioration conducive to give solidity to her independence would raise a barrier against the restless ambition of his aggressive policy.

This accounts for the paternal fondness with which the Muscovite autocracy pretended to venerate the ancient rights and privileges of Polish republicanism. To keep Poland in a state of bewilderment or lethargy was its chief care and object. In order that every avenue should be opened to insinuations of perfidious intrigues, Peter looked upon religious animosities as the mightiest channel that would effectually help him in gaining his purpose. He, therefore, the orthodox head of the Greek Church, began to show the greatest concern for the prosperity of the Romish Church in Poland, and having ingratiated himself with the Catholic party, he became the evil genius of its council. At his instigation, and with his approbation, a measure was decided upon, prohibiting the erection of new Protestant churches under the severest penalty. Such grievous injustice against one part of the same State indicated a complete departure from the generous spirit of the past, from the fundamental principle adopted and proclaimed in 1573, a principle of civil and religious liberty, which gave an air of superior dignity to Poland, especially as it was then disowned by the rest of Europe.

This forgetfulness, however, took its rise not so much from a disposition to cruelty, as in an error common to all religious zealots impatient of any dissent; and such is the infirmity of the human mind, that religion, which ought to be the means of softening, of uniting men in the bond of mutual benevolence and charity, has ever been a most bitter source of hatred. No wonder that Poland, in her days of decline, when vigor of thought forsook her, fell into a fault so palatable to the blind aspirations or passions of the

faithful. It happened at a period most unfortunate for her, when the Muscovite influence initiated itself into the very pulsation of her heart, and presided over the feverish circulation of her blood. Poland, in reality, was already a sick person, under the care of the Czar of Moscow as its physician. And, indeed, Peter left a prescription in his celebrated will as a legacy to his successors, for the future treatment of his patient, so that it might gradually sink into its grave without exciting suspicion of unfair play. The sentiments and views of Peter became the law to his successors, and each of them inherited the art of imitation to perfection. Each continued to stir up dissensions, and kept on, under the plausible pretext, the most intrusive interference; nay, they had even the hardihood to claim credit for disinterestedness and humanity in protecting the rights of the weaker against the oppression of the stronger.

The whole scheme, curious in details, and fraudulent in the execution, was a deep-laid conspiracy, conducted with vigilance and perseverance, at the expense of truth, morality, and every law, human and divine. Notwithstanding the loudest protestations and assurances given in the concluded treaties, that the Czar will ever most religiously abstain from meddling with the internal affairs of Poland, yet, no sooner did the throne become vacant, than the Muscovite troops were hurried to the seat of election, adding insult to this violation of the national rights, by a proclamation, declaring that this step was only taken for the purpose of affording protection to her liberties. But the real object was to support the claim of the Elector of Saxony, the son of the defunct king. On the other

hand, the Elector of Saxony presented himself at the head of his own troops, more in the attitude of a disputant than a candidate for the crown. Thus, the nation coerced, yielded contrary to its general wishes, for had the free choice been allowed to take place, no doubt Stanislaus Leszczynski would have been preferred. The latter arrived too late to rally the national party, and Frederick Augustus III. assumed the title of the Polish King in 1733, under the patronage of the Muscovite Government.

During this reign, everything concurred to extinguish the lingering spark of the national spirit. Demoralisation made fearful progress. The vitiated taste of the court, in manners and habits, lost sight of its high duties, and wasted its mind upon trifles. The sum of evils was great, but one in particular left its sting in the wound, of a most dangerous nature. The purity of the mother tongue, and its literature, fell into confusion similar to that at the tower of Babel. The fashion of latinising almost every word grew to such a ridiculous extent, that the beauty of both languages lost their primitive freshness in the compound of a barbarous jargon. If we had to fix our attention upon a period most unfortunate for Poland, it would be the reign of the two Electors of Saxony. Under their auspices, nationality was attacked and undermined by a combination of hostile influences, all of which, in their origin and growth, had the fostering care of the two kings.

However, the pressure of harrowing sufferings, and the appalling condition of the country, created, as a course of necessity, the greatest alarm and solicitude in some minds, animated with the purest intentions and

patriotism. In consequence, two political parties came to the surface at the same time; one cherished a hope, through the instrumentality of foreign courts, of checking licentious liberty, and consolidating the State on the principle of order—the other wished to exclude all foreign interference, and resuscitate the energy of the ancient spirit as a continuation of the glorious career of independence of the past. At the head of the former stood the illustrious house of Prince Czartoryski; the leaders of the latter were Prince Radziwill and Potocki. Both were mistaken in the application of means, though each with honest sincerity strove to accomplish one and the same object. The one had not sufficient consideration for the danger of confiding the destiny of the country to the grasp of a greedy and perfidious neighbor, who had on previous occasions already outraged good faith and national sentiment: the other did not rise to a conception suitable to the emergency of the purpose, and the exigencies of the times. The magnificent work of independence and liberty could not be carried on or executed with the mischievous tool of *liberum veto*, nor in the absence of laws and regulations calculated to give a happy direction to the awakened national enthusiasm. To both, soon an opportunity presented itself, disclosing the arduous task of their respective difficulties.

The Court of St. Petersburg had, at this time, for its Empress, the notorious Catherine II. None understood better than she the spirit of the will left by Peter; and none displayed so much ingenuity, so much plianceness of mind and purpose suited to the occasion. At the same time, she had no rival in dissoluteness

of principle, and unscrupulousness as to the means employed for executing her wishes. In the course of her amorous adventures, a Pole, young and handsome, became her favorite, and the object of her passions. Under the impulse of a love reverie, she conceived the idea of placing the Polish crown upon his head, not without some mixture of cool calculation that he might be an obsequious champion of her political designs. To this effect a secret treaty was concluded between the Courts of St. Petersburg and Berlin, to force the Poles to accept a king of their own choosing, whilst the party of Czartoryski was gained to the project by the blandishments of the Empress, and a prospect held out by her as to the facility with which useful reforms might be accomplished under the reign of a Piast (a Pole), to which no hindrance on her part would be offered. On the other hand, when the Senate or the Elective Diet found themselves surrounded by the Muscovite troops, neither the presence of a formidable artillery, nor the swarms of Cossacks in the streets of Warsaw, intimidated the just indignation roused in the breast of the virtuous citizens. The Marshal of the Diet (the Speaker) courageously refused to open the proceedings, alleging that the presence of foreign troops was the most scandalous violation of the Constitution, and demanded, first of all, their immediate withdrawal.

Here a memorable scene ensued—a scene worthy of the best period of Roman grandeur—a scene that astonished and terrified the audacious insolence of the Court of St. Petersburg—a scene indicating the loftiness of a spirit recovering the consciousness of its dying greatness. The declaration of the Marshal produced

confusion and tumult. A rush was made upon him with drawn swords by the Muscovite faction. But the glittering steel did not for a moment disconcert the noble patriot Mokranowski. ‘What!’ exclaimed he, in a voice of superior resolution, ‘do you want a victim? Here am I—strike this breast; I shall die as I lived, the worshipper of national independence and liberty!’ At these words, a sudden shame paralysed the movement of the rioters. They shrunk back, and a breathless calm succeeded. Then Mokranowski and his party, relying upon the validity of the constitutional privilege of *liberum veto*, proclaimed the dissolution of the Diet, as the only means for escaping the degradation of yielding to the dictates of foreign power. In the midst of a solemn silence, they left the deliberative assembly unmolested.

But the times were changed. The once magic authority of *liberum veto* lost its hold upon this occasion. The threats of the Muscovites had a greater effect upon the timid, the hopeful, who sincerely clung to a thought that the present national humiliation may be redeemed by the introduction of useful reforms, which once for all shall put an end in future to foreign interference; and, under the impression of such anticipations, a knot of the deputies continued the proceedings of the Diet, whose number was also increased by some corrupted partisans of the Court of St. Petersburg. Without possessing a right to legality, the election of Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski was announced on the 7th of May, 1764, as the result of legal proceedings, sanctioned by an enthusiastic unanimity, no doubt well sustained by the shouts of the Muscovite soldiers.

Thus closed the Third Period of the political career of Poland, with symptoms shadowing forth coming events. On the one hand, the arrogant conduct of a foreign court gave evidences of its determination to trample upon the rights of an independent State; on the other hand, a flash of heroic spirit threw the light of hope upon the gloomy brow of freedom, like lightning, that rends with its glare the dark bosom of the clouds, before the loud peal of thunder announces the commencement of a tempest.

The Fourth Period.

THE EFFORTS OF POLAND TO PRESERVE AND DEFEND HER
NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE.

A.D. 1764 TO OUR DAYS.

THE elevation of Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski to the Polish throne might have been productive of much good, had the two national parties, which were roused from a long lethargy to the consciousness of danger, acted more in unison, and met the objections of each with a conciliatory consideration. But the singleness of sentiment and idea of each made them uphold with passion their views separately, losing sight of the maxim, that division strengthens the hands of the enemy; whilst the Muscovite Government played a most extraordinary part in the refinement of perfidious duplicity. Now, it sided with one; now, with another; exasperating alternately each against the other, thus gradually bringing both under its influence.

At the very outset, those who put implicit belief in the professions of friendship of the Czarina Catherine II., had first to repent their credulity. Scarcely was her favorite invested with the dignity of

king, than she put his docility to the most humiliating test. Doubtless, she felt particular anxiety to stamp an indelible impression upon the mind of the king, that his safety and position depended altogether on her good will, to render him an easy tool of her political schemes and aspirations. The first energetic and wise step of the monarchical party, whose leader was Prince Augustus Czartoryski, found itself in direct opposition to the views of St. Petersburg. Who would have supposed, or doubted for a moment, that measures-tending to strengthen royalty in Poland could displease the royal head of the Muscovite empire? Common sense would call it mental aberration to undermine the foundation of a principle, in the stability of which one should feel the deepest concern. But what stigma would history attach to the deliberate actions of a power, in aiding to thwart or abate the establishment of that very dignity which had a claim to its fellowship? If selfishness, in its ordinary character, exhibits unpleasant features, how monstrous it must be when it becomes the incarnation of every sentiment, thought, action, and desire. Then, like the grasp of Satan, it immolates every obligation, every tie, and into one common snare of perdition would gladly drag friends and foes, that it may, on the ruins of all, build its unrivalled grandeur.

Such was, and is still, the spirit of the Muscovite Empire. No sooner was it known that the royal authority acquired new importance by the extension of its executive powers with regard to the disposition of public officers of various departments, but especially when the abolition of *liberum veto*, and the augmentation of the standing army, were spoken of, than the

Cabinet of St. Petersburg, jointly with Berlin, presented the strongest opposition to the projected reforms, under a plea that they were bound by treaties to protect and honor the ancient privileges of the Polish Republic. To give a greater weight to the mockery and insult with which the proceedings of the royalists met at their hands, at the instigation and by the encouragement of the Muscovite agents, a republican party formed itself into a Confederation,* and took upon themselves the right of legislating for the country.

However pure and noble their intentions might have been, they had soon occasion to feel the nothingness of their efforts, because they committed the same error as the royalists, by beginning and conducting their proceedings under the Muscovite auspices. The Cabinet of St. Petersburg espoused publicly the views of the Confederation, and recommended to its consideration the subject of religious liberty. In the generous spirit of the fundamental law of Poland of the sixteenth century, it admitted the Dissidents (Protestants) to equal participation of all rights and freedom. But it was not the object of the Muscovite Government that this law should ever be in operation. It would have contributed to the reëstablishment of good harmony between the different parts of the nation hitherto split into hostile camps. It would have lost its hold of an element, the nurse of the strongest and bitterest passions. Therefore, as soon as the royalists, intimidated, gave up the plan of their useful reforms, which the Muscovites, jointly with the republicans, denounced as having had for their

* Avowed opposition.

object the elevation of monarchy on the ruins of the Republic, than at the same time orders were sent by Repnin, the Muscovite Ambassador, to the confederates, that they should immediately disperse, submit, and honor their king—whilst no further notice was taken of the acts of their legislation. Both parties had their turn of separate humiliation; both had still to learn, with the progress of sad experience, that the solidity of the State does not rest on any exclusive idea, but on a combination of mutual concessions for the common good.

This period, however, affords a complete refutation of the opinion of some, with regard to the good faith and sincerity with which the Muscovite Empire protected the interest of religious freedom in Poland. Even the shadow of that credit must vanish before the light thrown by the facts, exhibiting on the contrary the malignity of its designs. Why did it not carry out the legislature of the very Confederation, which, under its sanction, removed this irksome cause of complaint? Its influence was all powerful—its simple wish would have been then sufficient to enforce so beneficial an act of justice. But because it was a beneficial measure, a measure of justice, it was therefore incompatible with the original intentions of autocracy. Neither did it desire to lend its hand that the internal pacification of Poland might be accelerated, nor would it allow any patriotic party to make a single step in the same direction. Embroilment of Poland was the standing order of the Muscovite policy, that it might in the confusion, like a thief in a tumult or a crowd, have the better opportunity of stealing without the stigma of guilt.

A narrative of this singular conduct of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg might have excited some astonishment or credulity in the minds dazzled more by its rapid rise to so commanding a position, than accustomed to examine the means by which success has been secured to its workings. But, in our days, even a doubt cannot be admitted as to its character. It made an attempt to reëct the very same farce in Turkey, which more than half a century back was played in Poland. The same anxiety and zeal for the interest of religion was put forth as a cover as well as a pretext for interference in the affairs of Turkey. The same ostentatious avowals of its disinterestedness, of its amicable intentions, of its gracious solicitude for the consolidation of the Ottoman Empire, were impudently paraded to blind or calm the apprehensions and susceptibilities of other Cabinets. On this occasion, however, the veil was either too transparent, or, what is more probable, the eyes of Europe were wide open, with the determination not to wink, but to see clearly every item hidden behind the curtain. Thus, the hideousness of its treacherous designs produced the happy coalition between Great Britain and France, and gave rise to the present struggle. Poland, less fortunate than Turkey, in the midst of her difficulties scarcely excited a faint interest in some, whilst several neighbors, whose common instinct ought to have predisposed them to respect the rights of property, as if under the influence of infatuation, agreed to act jointly the part of robbers.

Although the hatching of the plan was for some time carried on with the utmost secrecy, an early rumor about it spread itself abroad, and obtained a wide

circulation. This circumstance called forth the most extraordinary exhibition, characterised by the deepest hypocrisy, and a total disregard, or rather contempt, for truth. Protestations announced to the world the *poignant grief* and *indignation* of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, that such a black *calumny* should have been thrown upon its *integrity*. It expressed surprise that so *malevolent a suspicion* could have been attached to its *friendly offices*, and hurled a terrible denunciation against all disseminators of such *derogatory insinuations*, calculated to ruin the confidence which harmonised the relations between itself and the Polish Republic. At the same time, to give a stronger colorable evidence of its sincerity, a treaty was concluded with Prussia, by virtue of which they declared themselves the *guardians* of the rights of Poland. The refinement of such a mockery has no parallel in the history of mankind. Alas! documents of this sort are mute witnesses and a disgraceful monument of the wickedness and mental depravity of those whom they represent. Poland alone had an intuitive perception of their perfidious character, and added earnestness to the mistrust. The royalists again stood foremost, pressing with anxiety the measures that could only re-constitute national independence—the augmentation of the standing army, and withdrawal of the Muscovite troops, formed their purport. The voice of the Bishop of Cracow, Cajetan Soltyk, rung fearlessly with anathema against the forgetfulness of public duties and timidity of the citizens, either submitting themselves tamely or clinging to foreign protection. Prince Augustus Czartoryski spoke also, condemning openly all those who sought to weaken the sentiment of

self-reliance by upholding the perennial influence of strangers.

This dignified movement gave strong offence to St. Petersburg. It peremptorily demanded the dismissal of Prince Czartoryski from his ministerial office. The king and senators were alternately insulted by the ruffianism of its ambassador, Repnin. The insolent conduct of Menzikoff in Turkey, in our days, was only a copy, a miniature, a faint repetition of what once took place in Warsaw. The ideas, the sentiment, and spirit of the Muscovite Empire, are traditional—they do not undergo any change or modification. On all occasions the same arrogance, the same cunning, and the same grasping policy will be found to constitute its vitality. Whilst it bullied the king and the royalists, it was all sympathy and pretended solicitude for the advancement of religious liberty. It pressed upon the consideration of the Diet the claims of Dissidents (Protestants of all shades) demanding too large concessions in their favor to make the project entertainable. Well it knew that the settlement of so grave a subject might provoke angry feelings, making a still wider breach between the religious parties, hoping at the same time to reap credit for its devotedness to religious interest.

No one of well-organised intellect would for a moment hesitate to acknowledge religious liberty as the incontestable right of every man and every society. Infringement, therefore, upon it, should be looked upon as an act of striking injustice. But on some occasions, even opposition to redress such a grievance may be defended by an admissible apology. The internal ameliorations of the country, and the ad-

justment of various rights and claims, should be an emanation of native influences, with the progress of which national institutions become gradually an embodiment of national intelligence and wants. If the requisition of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, with regard to the just claims of the Dissidents, was complied with, what would have been the consequences? The noblest boon, that of religious liberty, could only rise to the character of a simple gift, and that from a foreign power, stripped of its richest fruit, crippled in its growth and development, by falling into the very abject dependence from which it wished to emerge, and that, yet, into a dependence upon a foreign protectionist. In like manner, as in our days, the Ottoman Empire is justified in having resisted the illusory pretensions of Russia to a protectorate over its Christian subjects, Poland, for the same political motives, felt the necessity of offering the strongest opposition to a similar intrusion. It was not so much the question whether the Dissidents should be admitted to the participation of equal advantages with the State religion, as whether Poland was still an independent country, or subject to the dictation of her neighbor?

The patriots stood by their duty. The Bishop Soltyk again distinguished himself, by able expositions of the criminality and error of those who were seeking redress through unconstitutional means. He looked upon the scheme with gloomy apprehensions, and endeavored to diffuse general suspicion and discontent against the perfidious professions of Russia. The whole assembly was deeply affected and electrified by the soundness of his arguments and warmth of his

sentiments. Russia saw the danger that might arise from a repetition of such appeals to the national prejudices and spirit. It decided upon a step as extraordinary as novel, more suitable to an arbitrary master than to a simple ally or a friend. In the depth of night, the Bishop Soltyk and several other senators were surprised and carried off into exile to Siberia. The news of such an outrage upon the rights of an independent nation threw the whole country into the greatest fermentation. It would be difficult to say whether the feeling of contempt was more general for the pusillanimous king, who did not know how to make his own dignity to be respected abroad, and to protect his subjects against the violence of a foreign power, or that of indignation against the arrogance of the latter. At the same time, the nation must have been already in a weak and prostrate condition, for, instead of flying to arms as one man, with a unanimous determination not to allow so remarkable an insult to pass with impunity, the Diet limited its proceedings to entering a protest and demanding an explanation from the Muscovite Ambassador for conduct of so strange a nature.

The very tameness with which so grave a matter was put forward gave new encouragement to further insolence. After some delay, an answer was returned, that the individuals in question, having designedly misrepresented the friendly relations of the Empress Catherine with the Polish Republic, rendered themselves amenable to punishment, and as the common good of both required that mutual harmony should not experience any interruption, it was necessary to make a public example of the refractory. From this it would appear

that Poland had no tribunals of her own to punish the guilty! This document of mock-justification was endorsed with the renewal of a pledge as to the *honorable views* of the Muscovite policy with regard to the permanent safety and independence of Poland. But national dignity was too deeply wounded to be satisfied with so lame an apology, more calculated to augment irritation than to calm the feverish excitement.

In answer to the Russian manifesto, in which the magnanimity and *purity of the character* of the Czarina Catherine were adulously extolled, a proclamation shortly after made its appearance on the 29th of February, 1768, from a small band of patriots assembled at the little town of Bar, near the frontiers of Turkey, in which they enumerated the perfidious course of the Muscovite Government, and called upon the country to join and support with all its means their Confederation, which had for its object to free the internal administration from the disgrace of foreign influence, and thus to restore full scope to the development of the national spirit and liberty. The annals of the Confederation of Bar may be called an interesting epopee, full of sublime incidents. What alternations of hope and fear, of grief and exultation; what courage and perseverance on the one hand; what steadiness and devotion on the other! The genius of a Homer would have had a rich supply to satisfy the cravings of its active imagination. The versatility of scenes in pathos, in the elevation of chivalrous character by the side of the horrible and barbarous, would have created so many episodes, each constituting a link of one and the same subject—‘The Confederation of Bar.’

But, brilliant as it may be in its details and character, the political blunders committed by its founders were equally great. A nation that desired to emancipate itself from a foreign yoke ought to have studiously avoided offending any part of the same State, as unity of action was required for the achievement of so great an undertaking. In opposition to this absolute necessity, two exclusive objects were inscribed upon its banners — 'Defence of the Established Religion' (Church of Rome), and 'Maintenance of the Ancient Privileges of the Republic.' By the first declaration, a large number of the citizens belonging to different Protestant congregations were alienated from the movement, in which their coöperation would have been of the greatest importance. By the second, it repulsed the royalists, who had at heart the introduction of many useful reforms calculated to strengthen the executive power, and lay a stronger foundation to the growth of a well regulated freedom.

This mutilation of the national efforts proved advantageous to the designs of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg. It had no difficulty in persuading the weak-minded king that his authority and his personal safety were menaced by the rebellious spirit of the nation; and that he should throw himself upon its support as one of his most faithful and friendly allies; that he should demand officially, through the medium of the Senate, that its troops might continue the occupation of the country, and assist in putting down the Confederation of Bar. All these suggestions had the favorable ear of the king, and were complied with in spite of the strenuous opposition offered to so

humiliating a step by Prince Augustus Czartoryski and several of the senators. Thus, having been successful in this direction, it immediately despatched a fresh supply of troops, with distinct orders to spread desolation with fire and sword — and this order was literally fulfilled. Towns and villages were fast disappearing — women and children butchered in a most barbarous manner.

These atrocities cast a still greater reproach upon the actors, as the horrible deeds were committed in the name of religion, that had ever for its sacred mission to inspire mankind with the noblest sentiments and charitable disposition towards each other. But the Muscovite Government used it as a means of exciting the worst passions. Profiting by the blunder of the Confederates of Bar, who proclaimed themselves the champion knights of a particular church, it gathered under its protection the excluded ones, and kindled the fanaticism especially of the Greek congregations, with a design of giving a religious character to the cause of disorders and disturbances, that the distant Cabinets of Europe, and in particular the Protestants, might take a false view of the struggle, and easily justify its interference upon that very ground.

The Cossacks, traditionally attached to an adventurous and roaming life in quest of booty, were supplied with arms, and exhorted by the priests, in the name of the holy orthodox Church of Moscow, to exterminate the heretic rebels. The scenes of cruelty of the Jacqueries of France, of the fourteenth century, would have lost much of their frightful aspect if placed by the side of what took place in Poland

in the eighteenth century. The names of Gonta, Zelezniak, Tymienko, the leaders of haydemacks or brigands, acquired notoriety in the personification of satanic exultation in the multiplicity and excesses of crime. The enumeration of them would only sicken the mind of my readers, and cast a gloom over the nature of humanity, that could be capable of sinking in worth beneath the brute creation.

However, one picture may be brought to notice as an illustration. It was their favorite amusement, after collecting a number of prisoners, to inter them alive up to the neck, and then with a scythe to mow their heads. Perhaps they were of the same opinion as the late Czar Nicholas, who said, when remonstrated to spare human life in his interference with the Hungarian struggle, ‘Men are like grass ; as soon as it is mowed it grows up again.’ No doubt this maxim represents the whole philosophy of the Muscovite Czardom, and proved identical with the atrocities under our consideration. As to the wholesale slaughter of towns and villages, it is computed by an eye-witness, a contemporary French historian Rulhiere, that more than two hundred thousand persons perished by the hands of those assassins. Yet, this accumulation of calamitous misfortunes, did not break the spirit of the Confederates of Bar.

They were a genuine type of the Polish ancient martial character. Undismayed by difficulties, full of self-reliance, they scorned to attach any importance to the numerical strength of the enemy. Without a regular army — with a scanty supply of ammunition—with the want of unity amongst the leaders—still they maintained their ground for the

space of four years against a swarm of well-disciplined troops. Had the Confederates of Bar made a compromise with the royalists, who repeatedly tried to effect with them a good understanding, perhaps the events might have taken a happier direction. But they showed themselves unbent in their purpose, whilst, by an unsuccessful attempt to carry off the king, a colorable necessity was created for the continuation of the Muscovite interference.

Thus, a small band of the patriots kept back with undaunted heroism the pressure of every disadvantage. Their star for awhile appeared to shine brightly. France expressed a lively interest in the struggle; but beyond verbal encouragement did nothing in their favor. The Ottoman Empire alone appeared to possess a correct knowledge as to the danger of suffering the Muscovite influence to acquire ascendancy in the affairs of Poland. At first, it made strong remonstrances to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, which, proving unsuccessful, it did not hesitate to espouse the cause of the Confederates of Bar by declaring war against Russia. But the welcome assistance met with reverses in the field, and the victories obtained must have suggested to the Muscovite Government that it was a proper time for making a step towards the acquisition of a long-cherished object, namely, the political preponderance in Europe.

As long as Poland was an independent state, its scheme of aggrandisement at the expence of Turkey was uncertain, and its aspirations to the political preponderance in Europe impracticable. Hence, to destroy that barrier to its ambition was a plan never lost sight of. With whom did the proposition of the

dismemberment of Poland originate? That is of little consequence to my present purpose. The minutiae must be left to a more detailed history. No matter whether Frederick the Great, of Prussia, equally anxious to make his new kingdom of a better roundness, first sounded the Cabinet of St. Petersburg upon the subject, by the way of anticipation of its wishes, or that the Czarina Catherine led him into the temptation, as well as the pious Maria Theresa, of Austria, who, though conscious of the wickedness of the sin, had no courage to resist it, and, with tears in her eyes, yielded to its allurement. One thing is certain, that accomplices in the spoil were wanted and desired by Russia, as a distribution of guilt would easier screen the principal actor without diminishing the benefits sought after.

Thus, when the Confederates of Bar were still indulging themselves in the hope of reuniting their shattered strength, especially relying upon the promised neutrality of the two German powers, suddenly they were surprised to see the Austrian and Prussian troops entering Poland, with a declaration that all Poles ranged under the banners of the Confederation of Bar would be treated as rebels and malefactors, inviting, at the same time, the country to submit itself to the wisdom of three allied powers, viz., Russia, Austria, and Prussia, who had much at heart its pacification. But the consternation was still greater when the real object of the three *friendly umpires* transpired. Each of them taking possession of certain portions of Poland, called peremptorily upon the Polish Diet to recognise and ratify their claims, with threats that the slightest opposi-

tion or hesitation would be resented with the greatest severity.

This extraordinary act of plunder, executed by an agreement between the three potentates, announced to mankind the ascendancy of an evil principle in their policy, that augured a succession of many misfortunes, coupled with violence, injustice, and oppression. The year 1772 commemorates the treachery, falsehood, and complete want even of common morality of the three northern courts; for, although the criminal design they had upon the property of their neighbor was long settled among themselves, yet the circulation of rumors about it, almost on the eve of the commission of that deed, they had the hardihood to denounce them as calumny upon their best intentions in their transactions with Poland. Against such perfidious conduct she could not continue an effectual resistance in her exhausted condition. However, the tacit indignation manifested by the reluctance of the Diet to take their demands under its consideration, caused no little alarm to their guilty minds, impatient of delay in giving a legal character to their robbery. They had recourse to intimidation, which at last compelled the Diet, though thinly attended, to yield, in the hope that it would release the rest of the country from still greater calamities. Thus, by the first dismemberment of Poland, Prussia acquired upwards of six hundred square miles, including that part which is called Royal-Prussia, with the exception of Dantzick and Thorn. The share of Austria embraced more than twelve hundred square miles, with nearly three millions of population; and that of Russia nearly

two thousand square miles, extending its frontiers to the rivers Dwina and Dnieper.

The first partition of Poland brought on a favorable crisis in her life, exhausted by internal fever. Whilst standing with one foot in her grave, dug by her neighbors, into which they would have gladly hurried their victim, a transition took place, from prostration to rapid convalescence, followed by a complete resuscitation of the best energies and thoughts. There was but one anxiety, one solicitude—to heal the wounds by an efficacious remedy, to make the largest sacrifices for the consolidation of the common good. Even King Stanislaus participated in the rising national enthusiasm, and to all appearance busied himself with earnestness to bring about some happier change. Fortunately, a considerable number of men, illustrious by their civic virtues and extensive intelligence, formed an interesting gathering, bent upon the same object. In the meantime, a serious alteration occurred in the harmony of sentiment and views of the leagued triumvirate. Russia and Austria cast their longing eyes toward the Turkish Empire, where a still richer booty might have been picked up by their joint efforts. To this effect a treaty was concluded between them, the existence of which alarmed Prussia and England, and caused them to enter into a closer compact. Thus, the fears and jealousies having been roused, the alliance of Poland was sought after with eagerness alternately by the Cabinets of St. Petersburg and Berlin. The former made its usual boasting declaration that, as a great empire, it was raised above all suspicion with regard to the wish of merely extending its possessions; that it would be glad to

contribute rather to *the grandeur and prosperity of Poland* if she chose to make common cause in a war with Turkey. The latter appealed in more noble language, congratulating and urging upon the Poles the necessity of continuing, in the same spirit in which they began, the great work of administrative reform, and, should circumstances require, it would readily lend its assistance to carry out their views. Between the two influences, the good sense of the Poles did not hesitate in giving preference to Prussia, and a treaty was concluded between Poland and Prussia, through the mediation of Great Britain and Holland. That very fact may be pointed out as demonstrative of the conservative tendency of Poland, more preoccupied with the amelioration of her own organisation than dazzled by the temptation of plunder and aggrandisement. No sooner was it known at St. Petersburg than its protestation was communicated to the Diet, intimating that all measures introduced without its concurrence would be considered as an infringement upon the obligations set forth in their former treaties. However, the memorable Diet, which began its labors in 1788, pursued its task with unflinching courage and devotedness. It had evinced the most extraordinary unanimity of purpose, and took the most expanded view of the social wants in harmony with the spirit of the times. Impartial history would gladly linger, with undiminished intensity of interest, upon that special period of the gigantic efforts of the Polish nation on behalf of its national independence and freedom. No foreign influence had any share in its conceptions. The genuine purity of native genius was the only inspira-

tion, and its only pilot in the midst of its difficulties. In fact, Poland had the start of every other country in liberal ideas. The redress of grievances was neither extorted by violence of domestic revolution as in France, nor could it be called a concession to the clamor of the aggrieved. In its rise, progress, and final development, free from the pressure of compulsion, it displayed an unbroken train of sentiments alive to justice, and regulated by moderation. The subject of elevating the worthiest part of the nation to the rank of nobility or equestrian order, which may be translated into the English political phrase, 'the extension of franchises,' had the first care of the Diet. The result of its decision upon this point would have gradually and rapidly raised almost the whole nation to an equal participation of every right and privilege. Thus, it was enacted that towns were to present to each new Diet, held every two years, a list of thirty families for that honor; that every one who took a university degree, if plebeian, was to be nobilised; also all professors of the high colleges and universities. In the military service, the rank of Captain was fixed for the same purpose. Merchant's right to it was admissible as soon as any one of them became a proprietor of land or village, paying at the least five pounds taxes a year. Similar considerations and advantages were attached to every department of the civil service; in short, intelligence, industry, and merit were to receive due homage and the strongest encouragement. What a magnificent idea! Instead of pulling down society into a medley of coarse passions, it was arranged with the finest judgment, that its improvements could not experience

any interruption. And yet, by a strange perversity of the human mind, the Polish spirit, so essentially conservative in its tendency, has often been traduced, misrepresented, or stigmatised as destructive to peace and order. To show that we are justified in calling the Polish spirit essentially conservative in its tendency, we have only to follow the labors of that same Diet. The mischievous *liberum veto* was abolished, the troublesome elective monarchy transformed into a hereditary one, the ministers rendered responsible to the Diet, religious toleration adopted as the law of the land, liberty proclaimed to all classes and to all individuals as soon as they set their foot upon Polish ground: further, it was decided that every twenty-five years an extraordinary Diet should be assembled for the purpose of revising and altering the existing laws according to the wants and spirit of the times.

Such was the tenor of the Polish constitution given to the country in 1791, on the 3rd of May. These majestic changes have no parallel in the history of nations. The unanimity with which the privileged class removed the bar that stood hitherto between them and the rest of the people, and that at its own suggestion, and with its own approbation, surely, must be recognised as an act of rare dignity. Whilst in other countries, rivers of blood spilt, commemorated internal jealousies, animosities, and struggles, in Poland, the nobles, in the true sense of nobility, took the van in initiating the people into their rights. The King, the Senate, and the Diet represented, on the 3rd of May, the triumph of the civic virtues. The nation felt it deeply—its appreciation of the

occasion did not vanish with the transitory rejoicings. In the days of its political misfortunes, the 3rd of May had a national charm—it was a holy-day, a signal for the gathering of the patriots. This partiality of affection for the 3rd of May did not spring up from any eccentricity; the nation identified with it the abolition both of anarchy and slavery. As every year brought back the 3rd of May, it brought also the renovation of the national sentiments and of national hope. Such vitality could not be easily broken even by long adversity.

But my readers will better understand the value of the recollections connected with that day, if, in addition to the above enumerated reforms decided upon, we add an extract from the said Constitution of the 3rd of May, in reference to the agriculturists or peasants.

ARTICLE IV.—AGRICULTURISTS AND OTHER INHABITANTS IN THE COUNTRY.

‘Wishing to encourage in the most efficacious manner the population in all the domains of the Commonwealth, we hereby ensure entire liberty to all classes of individuals, foreigners as well, who shall come and establish themselves in Poland; or natives, who, having formerly quitted their country, would wish to return to it again. Thus, every person, foreigner or native, the moment he shall set his foot upon Polish ground, shall be free, without any constraint whatever, to exercise his industry in such a manner and in such places as he may incline.’

And in the face of such a noble document, the Poles are still charged in reproachful taunts as the planters of serfdom! Rather, it should be said, that their attachment to freedom gave bitter offence to the

three despotic neighbors, who leagued themselves in order to destroy them in body and in character.

Russia, having concluded peace with Turkey at the very time when these changes were taking place in Poland, it had leisure to give a fresh impulse to its intrigues, that her affairs might be again thrown into confusion. However, those who are in the habit of coming to hasty conclusions without a sufficient knowledge of facts, will have to correct their erroneous opinion, which seems sweepingly to blame the Polish nobility, as having been factious and corrupt; consequently, the principal cause of the downfall of their country. That, as a body, they were neither factious nor corrupt, the best refutation of it will be found in the miserable opposition to the establishment of the Constitution of the 3rd of May, got up by the exertions of Russian influence, known under the name of the Confederation of Targowitz. Two senators only, and a handful of nobles, were to be found base enough to desert the national cause. They made an application to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, that it would honor them with its protection, and assist them in preventing the introduction of the innovations destructive to the glorious privileges of the ancient republic. A document sustained by so limited a number of signatures of local influence, even in private transactions of some magnitude, could not lay claim to public confidence; and what now in State affairs?

But it mattered not for Russia whether that document was a faithful representation of the national wishes, or a libel upon them; whether it was in harmony with the genuine feeling of the country, or an emanation of the few gained to its side by corruption—

it wanted only a pretext for its interference, that it might be able to make distant lookers-on believe that it complied with the solicitations of the Poles themselves.

Now, my readers, being acquainted with the general spirit of the Constitution of the 3rd of May, will, doubtless, be no little surprised to learn that the Cabinet of St. Petersburg denounced it in the harshest terms, as the work of an obnoxious revolution, that had no regard or respect for the ancient order of things; and, therefore, as an ally and friend of the Polish republic, it could not view with indifference the danger to which it was hurried by a set of *hot-headed Jacobins*. If this appellation was given to the royalists in imitation of the Scots—and it could not be otherwise, as the Parisian Clubists of the same name did not raise at the time their monster head—it is evident that the improved condition of the cause of royalty, the recognition of its hereditary rights, coupled with the adoption of civil and religious liberty, disturbed the dreams of the Muscovite policy, as these changes, once transformed into practice, would have put an end to its invidious designs. Hence, it hastened to destroy the noblest work of the Polish intelligence, still professing to be animated with the most *magnanimous intentions*, and having no other object in ordering its troops to enter Poland than *her own good*.

But the Poles had no faith in the smooth tongue of the two-headed monster,* whose gory claws were only watching for an opportunity of seizing its victim. Active preparations were made to repel force by force. Besides, an embassy was sent to Berlin in the expec-

* The arms of Russia—two-headed black eagle.

tation that Frederick William II. would, in virtue of a treaty concluded between Poland and Prussia in 1790, assist the Poles with his troops on this occasion. They had strong reason for entertaining such a hope, as the King of Prussia made a public demonstration, by a special ambassador sent to congratulate the Polish King and the Diet upon the happy issue of their labors. However, ill fate, as it appears, took then into its own hands the management of the Polish affairs. In vain the Polish martial spirit felt all anxiety to be led to the field of battle—in vain did Kosciuszko display his superior talent by a prodigious defence of Dubienka against the Russian forces, considerably stronger in number. The king, forgetful of his own dignity, forgetful of the solemnity of the oath which bound him at every sacrifice to cling to the Constitution of the 3rd of May—forgetful of his sacred duty to stand or fall in his country's cause—as if fascinated by the recollections of his youthful adventures with the Empress Catherine, he lent himself again to the siren's melodious insinuations; he lost, speaking charitably, the powers of judgment, and, listening to the treacherous voice of that personification of the fabulous goddess, who, it was believed, enticed men by charming singing that it might devour them, prepared the same fate for himself and for his country. In fact, the Polish King, in order to reinstate himself in the good graces of the Empress Catherine, renounced all connexion with the Constitution of the 3rd of May, of which he was a zealous promoter, by his accession to the Confederation of Targowitz.

This desertion of the king to the side of the enemy

struck the Polish army with discouragement and consternation. It paralysed its movements; but even, had its spirit remained unshaken, all means were taken away for keeping the ground by the surrender of the warlike stores to the Russians. On the other hand, the embassy sent to Berlin brought to light the darkest treachery that ever disgraced frail human nature. In direct contradiction to the tenor of the existing treaty, binding both Poland and Prussia to act jointly in the case of war with Russia, Frederick William II., who so loudly applauded the majestic progress of reforms, the realisation of which was the Constitution of the 3rd of May, gave the lie to all these public testimonies, by returning an answer, ‘That, as he did not take any part in the Polish legislation, he did not feel himself bound to defend its acts.’ This perfidious conduct makes censure drop its voice, and behold in mute amazement so much wickedness and falsehood debasing the exalted position of royalty. I believe that no comment is required upon an enormity so notorious, as the spontaneous indignation of my readers will supply its place. Thus, the blame should not be thrown merely upon the Polish nobility, disunited or corrupted, but also upon the treachery of the kings, who disregarded every tie of sacred obligation in word and deed. On the one hand, the Polish king, like a broken link, slipped always from the fastening of the national chain; on the other, the King of Prussia, equally faithless, made common cause with the Muscovites.

It was impossible for the Poles to contend against such a combination. Many patriots quitted in despair

their country, that they might be more at liberty to devise means for its future liberation—among whom, Kosciuszko was one. Dresden was the place of their gathering. Their anguish must have been great, when it became known that the Constitution of the 3rd of May was abolished; its framers and supporters denounced as the enemies of the State; and that Russia and Prussia, in order, as they said, to pacify the restlessness of the Polish Republic, had arrived at the conclusion, that its dimensions should be narrowed for its own *benefit*. Under such an extraordinary and ridiculous pretext, the second partition of Poland was effected. Russia took possession of nearly four thousand square miles. Prussia contented herself with a more modest share of about one thousand square miles, including Dantzig and Thorn. So great an iniquity was a guiding thought of the two upstart powers, for both Russia and Prussia, as states, had scarcely a few respectable pages as yet in the history of mankind. Both began to grow into a substantial political existence in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Both ran a race, with the strong passions of reckless gamblers, to make acquisitions by every means; and both should have been arraigned before the tribunal of the human family as delinquents of a serious character, conspiring against the progress of social improvements and moral elevation.

But as the physical world has its moments of sudden fermentation, so also has the mental. Incidents of this kind favor the lawless proceedings, which either escape unnoticed or gain unmerited applause. Thus, Russia and Prussia, profiting by the awful state of things in France, which spread their contagion

far and wide, and struck terror into the whole fabric of the ancient world, satisfied Austria, who had no share in the second partition of Poland, that as the latter country consisted of materials most combustible, and, in consequence, was liable to kindle the same fire in imitation of France, therefore, it was for the good of Austria, and the ancient conservative principle of Europe, that the Cabinets of St. Petersburg and Berlin should have taken preventive measures, and rewarded themselves by judicious spoils.

Whether that sort of logic had the concurrence of the Cabinet of St. James's, we have no official document under our consideration to enable us to say, yes, or no. But at any rate its reserve was agreeably interrupted with the eulogium, like funeral orations, pronounced by the brightest British intelligence, in favor of the defunct Polish Constitution of the 3rd of May. Mackintosh, in his defence of the French Revolution, thus speaks of it—‘The Government of every State may compare the violent agitation which the opposition has caused in France with the tranquil and dignified reform which the Government of Poland has obtained.’ Fox said, ‘that the Constitution of the 3rd of May was a work which every friend of liberty ought sincerely to love’; whilst Edmund Burke drew the attention of Parliament to it in the following manner: ‘Mankind ought to rejoice and glory when they contemplate the change of Poland. There is nothing feeble, nothing shameful; it is one which in its nature is so elevated, that it will be one of the most noble boons ever conferred on humanity. It has destroyed anarchy and slavery.’ It is a consolation to Poland that references of so high authority

were left to posterity to plead the justice of her cause.

There is another honorable trace, to which history would point with satisfaction as a beautiful illustration of the Polish spirit. It is in the midst of reverses and misfortunes that its real worth was revealed. The Diet was assembled in 1793 at Grodno, in compliance with the demands of Russia and Prussia, that it might ratify their acts of usurpation. After the preliminary proceedings, when the object for which it was called together should have been taken into consideration, a death-like silence ensued, as if the assembly was suddenly struck dumb and deaf. Such an unexpected scene alarmed the Muscovite Commissioner, who was present to watch the progress of the transactions. He hastened to report it to the Russian ambassador Siever, and brought back a message that the King, the Senators, and the Deputies were to remain in their respective places day and night, without interruption, until the matter was settled. And actually for twenty-four hours no change occurred in their tacit resistance. But Muscovite wit at last gave its own interpretation to the silence, taking it for an act of affirmation, and caused a proclamation to be issued to this effect. As arguments are generally of no avail against might, so on this occasion, surrounded by the enemy's troops, the Diet bowed to dictation, not, however, without drawing up a protest on the 24th September, 1793, in which we meet with the following remarkable passage: 'We accede in consequence only of being unable, even at the peril of our lives, to prevent the violence of our enemies from gaining

its triumph. We take heaven for our witness as to the purity of our intentions, and bequeath a sacred obligation to posterity, who may be more fortunate than ourselves in devising the means of saving our country.'

Thus was concluded the Second Act of the great tragedy of Poland.

Under such harassing circumstances, the Poles entered upon a new phasis of life. They could no longer place any reliance upon the firmness of the king, who by his late conduct forfeited all claim to confidence or even to respect. They could not act as an independent nation in an open manner without impediment or risk of bringing upon themselves some sort of a vexatious persecution. Hence, the necessity of secret conspiracies sprung up, and the emancipation of the country from a foreign yoke became a solemn sentiment shut up within the sanctuary of the heart, and mutual communication had its own symbols. Soon the patriots had occasion to try again the fortune of war. The aggressive designs of Russia being now no longer concealed, orders were sent from St. Petersburg, that the remnant of the Polish army should be disbanded. It was a signal for the Poles to rally round the national standard. General Madiłinski moved his little band in the direction of Cracow, feigning submission to the Muscovite wishes, but in reality it was a point fixed for the gathering of the patriots. Kosciuszko was unanimously proclaimed General-in-Chief, and to his appeal an enthusiastic response was given from the most distant corners of the country. As the name of Kosciuszko is in the

mouth of every Englishman who ever turns his thoughts towards Poland, it will not be a digression from my subject, and may prove satisfactory to my readers, if I devote some space to a brief biographical sketch of so remarkable a personage.

Thadeus Kosciuszko was born in 1756, of a noble family in Lithuania. He was educated at the military school of Warsaw, where he was so distinguished for his scientific acquirements as to be chosen one of four students, who were sent to travel at the expense of the State. In this capacity he visited France, where he remained for several years, cultivating his talents. He then returned to his own country, and obtained a company in the army. Love, which so often influences the future destinies of its votaries, and

— ‘rules the court, the camp, and grove,
And men below, and saints above,’

had also its share in the fortunes of Kosciuszko. A young lady, the daughter of the Marshal of Lithuania, one of the first officers of State of the Polish Court, engaged his affections; but the difference of station presenting so many obstacles to his passion, he expatriated himself. North America was at this time struggling for independence; thither the young soldier bent his steps, and entered the army of General Washington, and afterwards became his aide-de-camp. In this service he distinguished himself in such a manner that the most flattering encomiums were bestowed upon him by Franklin, and the Congress

of the United Provinces. He also received from them the order of Cincinnatus, being the first European, except La Fayette, who had been honored with it.

Upon the termination of the war, Kosciuszko returned to his own country, where he lived in retirement until 1789, when the Diet conferred upon him the rank of Major-General. On the 18th of June, 1792, at the battles of Zieleniec and Dubienka, he gave decided proofs of that military genius which afterwards raised him so high in the eyes of his countrymen and of all Europe. After the second partition of Poland, Kosciuszko and most of the other distinguished officers quitted the service, and retired to Dresden to wait for a proper opportunity to rescue their country from the hands of its oppressors. On the 24th of March, 1794, he joined the patriots in the vicinity of Cracow; a deed of confederacy was drawn up by which he was made Dictator, with absolute power—political, military, and civil. He immediately published a manifesto against the Russians, and with only 4,000 men, most of whom were merely armed with scythes, marched towards Warsaw. On the 4th of April, with this small body of troops, Kosciuszko encountered 10,000 of the enemy at Raclawice, whom, after a severe combat, he totally defeated. Three thousand Russians were left dead on the field, and a great number taken prisoners. Among many instances of great personal bravery and presence of mind is the following: A peasant of the name of Glowacki, carrying the scythe, seeing

a cannon about to be fired, rushed forward, and, ere the match could be applied, covered the touch-hole with his bonnet, and killed the soldier.

This victory was not without its fruits. The inhabitants of Warsaw, fired with the heroic deeds of their countrymen, immediately hoisted the standard of independence, and, after a terrible conflict of several days, drove every Russian out of their city. But fortune, always fickle, which hitherto had smiled upon the arms of the patriots, now began to frown. The perfidious, unblushing Frederick William II., without even the usual formality of declaring war, suddenly made his appearance at the head of 40,000 men, and effected a junction with the Russians. Austria also, under the pretence of neutrality, announced her intention of marching an army into Little Poland. The successes of the patriots were nothing against the fearful odds with which they had now to contend, and their situation soon became critical. Their enemies increased, whilst their resources diminished. The intelligence reaching the ears of Kosciuszko that new Russian forces were approaching with Suwarrow at their head, he resolved to intercept him, and, on the 10th of October, 1794, met him at a place called Macieiwice. For many hours Kosciuszko maintained his ground against the most disproportionate numbers. All that high-devoted patriotism could perform—all that the most determined bravery could accomplish—was done. At last, a furious charge was made with Kosciuszko at its head—a charge not unlike that of Balaclava—into the very heart of the

enemy, where he fell covered with wounds.* The catastrophe was dreadful—the loss of Kosciuszko filled the country with despair. Indeed, the mournful result of such an event has been beautifully recorded by the poetical inspiration of Thomas Campbell in the following lines :

‘ Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,
And Freedom shrieked when Kosciuszko fell.’

After these reverses the remains of the national army were concentrated at Prague, the suburb of Warsaw, which was defended with the most desperate valor. But the terrible moment of the enemy’s success had for its triumphal merit carnage and ruin. There was not a house left, and not a child spared by the ruthless invaders. The name of Suvarrow brings to the recollection the heart-rending scenes of the massacre of Prague, and represents a token of that friendship which was professed so often by Russia for Poland. But, if humanity has to deplore the manifestation of savage brutality in its own species in the common course of life, what should its feelings be when it contemplates a vicious nature giving a systematic arrangement to such practices ? The struggles of Poland will occupy in history a prominent place as important lessons to mankind. The first point that would press itself upon the consideration would be, what provocations was she guilty of against her neighbors whose dealings with her betrayed so

* After two years of severe imprisonment, Kosciuszko was restored to liberty on Paul’s accession to the throne. He died in Switzerland in 1817. His remains are deposited in the Cathedral at Cracow.

much bitterness and cruelty? No charge whatsoever can be substantiated by them that would justify their conduct. At no time did Poland show the least disposition to meddle herself in the internal affairs of her neighbors, nor made any aggressive encroachments.

Therefore, without provocation, she was subjected to all these calamities, and for no other offence than because she wished to put her own house in order. Evidently this truth was present to the mind of the poet when he wrote—

‘Oh, bloodiest picture in the book of time!
Sarmatia fell unwept without a crime!’

The capitulation of Warsaw followed the melancholy destruction of its suburb Prague. Ten months passed in a state of uncertainty, and discussions as to the final fate of Poland. At last, Catherine sent orders to the weak monarch to abdicate the crown she had given him permission to wear. The Act of his Abdication was presented to him on the 25th November, 1795, and there was a refinement of vexation in the selection of the day, it being that of the anniversary of his coronation. Had he possessed the courage to refuse obedience to the order for his abdication, he would have redeemed in some measure the remains of a political life which had only been a tissue of blunders. But he lost the opportunity. He put the finishing stroke to his degradation in going to beg his last asylum in the estates of this same Catherine, whose puppet he had been for the last thirty years. There he witnessed the

political disruption of Europe rapidly advancing, the first step of which had been the dissolution of Poland.

But, whilst the memory of King Stanislaus conjures up a train of political misfortunes for which he alone is held responsible by history, his merits should not be overlooked as a poor compensation for all mischief he had played to his country's cause. Fondly attached to learning and to national literature, he largely contributed to the revival of a zeal in cultivating the purity of the native language, and the general acquisition of knowledge. In imitation of Cæsar Augustus, he was the friend and patron of talent, and sought the society of men of genius, as if ambitious that his reign should rival the brilliancy of the Roman Augustine age. That he was eminently successful in that province, a long list of the distinguished literary characters can bear the most honorable testimony. The very Constitution of the 3rd of May was a work of the united intelligence, stamped with great depth of thought, with a habit of contemplation, sustained by the finest judgment. Independently of this, every department of science and literature had its illustrious representatives. It was a period of the most interesting contrasts. The rising light of Poland, though overwhelmed with a rapid tide of darkness, still left behind its scattered beams, which, like the studded stars of night, became the beacons of national recollections, of national sentiment, and of national spirit. The revival and growth of Polish literature rendered an immense service in this respect. The subject of national history had the

earnest attention of the studious compilers, among whom Adam Naruszewicz, the philosophical cast of whose mind qualified him for so important a task, executed a voluminous work with honor to himself and to the uncommon benefit of the country. He was equally successful in his poetical effusions, especially as a humorous satirist. But the palm of glory in this branch, as well as in the higher works of imagination, belongs to Ignace Krasicki, whose versatility of mind could be compared to that of Voltaire. Although his poems do not possess the majesty or the sublimity of Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' yet they may rival Voltaire's 'Henriad.' But, distinguished as he was in every kind of writing, he excelled in the composition of fables, and may well be regarded as a match for La Fontaine. All his fables are highly philosophical, and excite general admiration. The following one is a great favorite among the Poles, as it has the fellowship of their political misfortunes.

THE BIRD IN THE CAGE.

'What is it makes my mother wail ?'
Asked a young imprisoned nightingale.
'Art thou not happier in this home
Than when o'er fields thou used to roam ?'
'Here wast thou born,' said the old one,
'And canst not sigh for pleasure gone ;
For thou hast never known, like me,
How sweet a thing is liberty !
But captive now, these tears I shed
O'er freedom's blest enjoyments fled.'

The greatest merit of Krasicki consisted in his complete nationality. From him we turn with veneration to the memory of Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, the companion and friend of Kosciuszko, a beautiful type of patriotism and attachment, with which he cherished national historical characters that were great in war, or illustrious otherwise. This led him to the happy conception of rendering them familiar to every cottage, by a series of songs embodying their virtues and deeds; thus diffusing an excellent influence of the recollections of the past in an agreeable, easy, and popular manner. Great crimes, also, did not escape his notice, anxious, by upholding them to public execration and abhorrence, to diminish the chances of their repetition. Of these, the atrocity of Glinski, a powerful nobleman of Lithuania, committed in the beginning of the sixteenth century, suggested a theme terrific for its tragical character, and full of touching features in some of its details. As I have selected it as an illustration of the talent of our poet, a brief explanation of the incidents will render the subject of the song perfectly clear.

Glinski, as an eminent warrior, had scarcely a rival in glory. His popularity and renown received additional strength by the victories he gained over the Tartars, whose incursions were then frequent. Elated by success, and confident in self-importance, in the evil moment of pride he conceived the dark idea of executing a deed of revenge against the family of Zabrzezinski, whom he cordially hated. The Polish king, Alexander, was on his death-bed. Glinski had just

returned from the field of battle with fresh glory and trophies. It appeared to him a favorable opportunity for gratifying the feelings of revenge. He, therefore, surprised his victims in the night and murdered the whole family.

Such a great crime excited universal indignation. But the accession of the new king, Sigismund I., who was known for his strict attachment to equity, taking away all hope of escaping the pursuit of justice, he sought safety in flight, and offered his services to the Muscovite Czar. A murderer and a traitor to his country became a general-in-chief of the armies of its bitterest foe. Desolation succeeded to desolation. At last, when besieged in person by the Polish king, at Smolensk, repentance dawned upon his heart, and secret negotiations were opened for obtaining a pardon. But the vigilance of the Muscovite spies had scent of it. The Czar was informed, and Glinski, stripped of his dignity and deprived of sight, passed the remainder of life in the dark dungeon, to which place his only daughter gained permission to accompany him, where she was to him an angel of consolation.

GLINSKI.

In a dark, dreary dungeon, where the beam,
The gladdening beam of sun-light never shone;
Where from the dismal roof, its little stream
Of twilight pour'd a pendant lamp; alone,
And conscience-tortured—sat, to misery bound,
Glinski, in victory and in crime renowned.

His forehead, years and grief had furrow'd o'er ;
 His grey hair hung disorder'd on his brow ;
 His bloody sockets saw the light no more ;
 Plough'd were his wasted cheeks with scars and woe.
 He sat, and lean'd upon his hand : his groans
 Were echoed by the dungeon's gloomy stones.

With him his only child, his daughter fair,

A very gem of virtue, grace, and youth ;

She left the smiling world and the free air,

Her miserable father's woes to soothe ;

Pleased in that fearful solitude to stay,

While life's young bloom fled silently away.

' Father, I pray thee by these tender tears,'

So spake the maid, ' be comforted, and chase

Despair ; though chains hang heavy on thy years,

Yet hope deserts not e'en this desert place ;

Time yet may smile upon thee ; thou may'st rest

Thy grey old age upon thy country's breast.'

' My country ! breathe not that dread name to me,

For crimes rush down upon my tortured thought,

And waken'd conscience gnaws the memory,

And gentle sleep these eyes will visit not.

Did I not head her foes ! and can the name

Of traitor, but be link'd to death and shame ?

' All that can raise a man above mankind—

All that is good and great in war or peace—

Power—riches—beauty—courage—strength of mind,

Yes ! nature gave me these, and more than these :

I wanted nought but laurels—which I found,

And glory's trophies wreathed my temples round.

- ‘ The locust swarming hosts of Tartars broke
Upon Lithuania and Volhinia’s land—
Plundering, destroying, their terrific yoke
Spared neither sex and age ; the fiery brand
Of desolation swept the country o’er,
Children and mothers drown’d in father’s gore !
- ‘ I sought the invader’s ravage to withstand,
Proud of their strength, in wide-spread camps they lay,
But they were scatter’d by my victor-hand ;
The misty eve look’d on the battle fray,
While corpses on the Niemen’s waters rode,
And infidel blood the thirsty fields o’erflow’d.
- ‘ When Alexander on his dying bed
Lay—mourn’d by all his children—subjects—came
The news that the defeated Tartars fled ;
Upon his clouded brow joy’s holy flame
Kindled sweet peace—“ Now let me, let me die,
For I bequeath to Poland victory ! ”
- ‘ My deeds, my Monarch’s praises warm’d my breast,
And love of daring violence grew. The fame
Of Zabrzezinski oft disturb’d my rest,
I—a most foul and midnight murderer—came
And butcher’d all in sleep. My Poles rebell’d,
I join’d with Poland’s foes, by rage impell’d.
- ‘ Flagitious sin, and memory’s fiercest smart,
The eagle blended with the hurrying steed,*
From cruelty and crime won not my heart,
Nor sheath’d the sword that did the cruel deed—
The foeman Russ I bent to my control,
And fought ’gainst Poles—e’en I—e’en I—a Pole.

* The arms of Poland and Lithuania.

' I looked upon the battle-field ; I saw
 Many a well-known corpse among the dead :
 Then did fierce agony my bosom gnaw ;
 Then burning tears of conscious guilt were shed ;
 And I implored forgiveness—from my king,
 Forgiveness for a vile and outcast thing.

' I told my penitent tale. My foes had wrought
 Upon the Czar, and roused him to distrust ;
 He met indignantly my honest thought,
 Dashed my awakening virtue to the dust ;
 Bid them tear out my eyes, and bind me here
 In galling fetters to this dungeon drear.

' Ten years have pass'd, and yet I live. The sun
 And the gay stars shine on ; but not for me.
 Darkness and torments with my being run—
 My strength decays—my blood flows freezingly
 Through my chill'd veins ; and death, not gentle death,—
 Lays its rude hand upon my weakening breath.

' Yet a few days—this corpse, my grief's remains,
 Will ask a handful of unfriendly earth ;
 Leave then, my child, these foul and foreign plains,
 Blest who can claim the country of his birth ;
 The Poles forgive—and thou shalt be forgiven,
 My child be blest, and I be left to heaven !

' Yes, thou shalt see thy country, and its smile
 Shall chase the memory of these gloomy days ;
 Thy father's princely hall shall greet thee ; while
 Thy thought o'er long departed glory strays ;
 Thy friends, thy countrymen, shall welcome thee,
 Give thee their love, but pour their curse on me.

' Yet, e'en my death may hallow'd thoughts inspire ;
From this scathed trunk may wisdom's blossoms grow ;
My history shall check revengeful ire—
None other Pole shall join his country's foe.
Why should a traitor live, when he has bound
His veil'd and sorrowing country to the ground ? '

Thus spake the miserable man—a groan,
A dark and hollow groan the dungeon fill'd,
On her pale breast his snow white head was thrown,
Death's shade o'ershadow'd it, and all was still'd.—
So died the mighty Glinski ; better lot
Might have been his ; but he deserved it not.

In this manner, Julian Ursyn Niemeewicz was instructing the nation in the details of the Polish history. Every king, every distinguished citizen, had a share of his poetical inspirations, and a collection of these songs forms a national standard-work. Some of his prose works are of great merit; but a critical consideration of them does not enter into the design of this small volume. This reason will also prevent me from doing justice to the wide-spread intelligence. A great number present themselves to my mind with equal claims to consideration.

However, I must not tax my readers with the enumeration of names, or their specific characteristics, as I may be imperceptibly drawn into a lengthened dissertation. Still, I cannot resist the temptation of bringing to notice the two names of Kniaznin and Karpinski. The former, in the delicate touch of sorrowful sentiments, may be placed by the side of

Gray's 'Elegy'; the latter, like the Scottish bard, the immortal Burns, made himself familiar in every cottage, where the young maidens wile away the tedious hours of labor with his charming songs. The popularity of both was just and lasting. The following specimens of each are presented by way of illustration:

A MOTHER TO HER SLEEPING INFANT.

(BY KNIAZNIN.)

Sleep on, my babe, my treasure dear !
A tender mother sung ;
Joy of my soul, my hope, my fear !
Thus o'er his couch she hung.

Poor innocent ! how sound he sleeps !
Hush ! hush ! ah ! now he cries !
But yet, perhaps, these tears he weeps,
When o'er, will seal his eyes.

Ah, child ! what must thy mother bear
For her sweet darling boy,
Oppressed with every anxious care,
Ere you return her joy ?

But all those cares thou wilt repay
With love, in riper age ;
And be at last her hope and stay,
And all her fears assuage.

To virtues of the mind and heart
None shall surpass thy claim ;

Still adding lustre to each part,
Enbalm thy house in fame.

And when the world shall all admire
The laurels thou hast won,
How sweet to hear, on glory's lyre,
The praises of my son!

But, ah! what woes may yet me wait,
And put my dreams to flight?
Great God! what monster, deck'd with hate,
Appals my wandering sight?

Perhaps a villain thou may'st prove,
And blight thy honest name,
Despise thy mother's tender love,
And cover her with shame!

Perhaps, may act a traitor's part,
And earn thy country's hate.
Away! I tear thee from my heart,
And tremble for thy fate.

Perhaps may only be the source
Of every grief and woe;
Nay, death itself, from evil course,
Ungrateful boy, may flow.

Oh, God! can such be the reward
Of all my hopes and fears?
Ah, never!—and with fond regard
She dewed his cheek with tears.

TO MY FRIENDS.

(BY KARPINSKI.)

Nor gold nor silver is for me,
No gifts have I with you to share,
My lot is bound to poverty,
And knows not gems nor jewels rare.

Humble my cradle did me find,
And ever since to nature true,
Artless in speech, my heart still kind ;
As such, dear friends, I welcome you !

Behold, in this poor lowly cot,
All of earth's treasures I possess ;
Like me, then, if you love the spot
O, come ! and with me share its bliss.

'Tis friendship's voice the prayer doth make ;
My own hands did these rude walls rear,
And mid the toil, ne'er did forsake
The hope some friend my hearth might cheer.

Engraved upon this stone shall be
This hour of joy, and names so dear,
That latest ages long may see,
Friendship and virtue mingled here.

Thus, the mental activity of Poland was casting a lustrous reflection upon the ominous aspect of her political existence. However, its expansion met with a sudden check. With the third dismemberment the country lost its political independence, and the hostility of the spoliators did not rest satisfied with their respective plunders ;

but each betrayed the strongest avidity in effacing every trace of its national individuality, even as to the extinction of its mother-tongue. The German and the Russian languages were forced upon the Poles as the only medium of communication with the authorities. This act of cruel injustice kept a wider separation between the invaders and the natives. If the body bound with the heavy chains of oppression could not take immediate revenge upon the arrogant enemies, the spirit set at defiance their power, and, in return, harassed them with constant alarms, and made them rest on a bed of thorns. It also proclaimed its vitality to the world by a numerous emigration of the patriots, who, like missionaries, went forth to expose the iniquities of the three leagued potentates, and enlist the interest of humanity in favor of their wrongs. We cannot divest ourselves of the solemn impression, when contemplating these events, that Providence had assigned to Poland a weary path of pilgrimage, the task of the apostleship of a fellowship of nations in the name of justice and freedom. In like manner, as individuals of superior mind, by the dint of exertions, generally effect a kind of revolution in sentiment and ideas within a limited circle of their influence, so the collective mind of a nation, overwhelmed by cruel injuries, makes the heart of mankind vibrate to its appeals as one of its broken cords, and exercises upon the development of ideas and sympathies an influence of proportionate magnitude.

The first missionary labors of Poland happened,

however, at an unfortunate juncture of circumstances. One part of mankind in Europe, thrown into a feverish convulsion, with the energy of a maniac carried on the struggle, and arraigned against itself a strong opposition, of which the three guilty parties formed the principal nucleus. Hence, an echo of so great a crime as the annihilation of the national independence of Poland did not reproduce a successful response; because the former, in the midst of excitement, had no comprehensive notion of the matter foreign to its immediate object in view; whilst the innocent of the latter, who had no hand in the destruction of her rights, were easily persuaded by the guilty that the work was done for their common interest. Thus, though France spoke warmly about liberty and the emancipation of all nations, she had not the policy to give a distinct national destination to the Polish legion, which was to be formed in Italy under her protection.

On the other hand, England, as an ally of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, shut her eyes to their lawless depredations. Both France and England, in our days, cannot but see the error of the past with regard to Poland; still, notwithstanding the dearly bought experience, a repetition of the same error may be much feared.

Though at war with Russia, the very Polish element, which would have powerfully assisted the Allies in bringing the struggle to a speedy and successful termination, is allowed to remain dormant; or, what is worse, after long delays and hesitations,

there is now a desire to smuggle the Poles into a corps under a strange name.

What can be the meaning of this? Is Europe blind or poor in understanding, that she may be easily cheated by the employment of crooked ways? Does any person imagine that a foreign appellation of the rallying point of the Poles would be equally attractive to Poland? ‘What is a name or symbol?’ some exclaim. Oh, there is magic in the name and symbol of a native land! Let both the name and symbol be Polish, and, in a short time, the ranks of the legion will be filled with enthusiasm in the same manner as it was in 1796, nay, even with better success. Statesmen should never lose sight of the past for the sake of improving similar circumstances in the present. Procrastination, or underhand dealings, discredit the character of private transactions. What should be said of public men? In this respect France, in 1796, is worthy of honorable mention. If it did not make any special engagement with regard to Poland, there was, however, no secret made of the formation of a Polish legion.

Poland was called upon as a distinct element to take a part in the struggle, and no sooner was the proclamation of General Dombrowski issued to that purpose than thousands hastened to the spot, in spite of the vigilance and threats of the portioning powers, that individuals, leaving the country without their permission, if caught, would be punished with death. And, within the space of three months, the Polish legions rose to a respectable numerical strength,

whilst, during the eighteen years of their adherence to the cause of France, more than 200,000 Poles lost their lives clinging to the hope of recovering the independence of their country, and cheering up their patience with a patriotic song known under the name of ‘Dombrowski’s Mazurka,’ which begins with the words, ‘Poland is not lost as long as we live.’

The force of circumstances, and the false spirit of the French policy, gave a misapplication and squandered the enthusiasm of the Poles. Instead of keeping them on the road to their homes, Egypt, St. Domingo, and Spain, wasted their energies. However, as the genius of Bonaparte became, after the battle of Jena, fought in October, 1806, the arbitrary master of Prussia, one of the enemies of Poland, and forced Russia, also, to sue for peace, the treaty of Tilsit, concluded on July 8th, 1807, gave a new existence to Poland, too humble to satisfy the expectations of the Poles. Yet it had an appearance of an independent State under the modest appellation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Shortly after this disappointment, another and a more favorable opportunity presented itself, which left no room for any doubt as to the realisation of the deferred hope of the Polish patriots. The campaign of 1812, undertaken against Russia, led them to suppose that the restoration of Poland to her ancient dignity would be the immediate step of Napoleon’s plan. The emperor himself made a confession in his Memoirs, written at St. Helena, that he entertained at that period the serious thought of the reorganisation of Poland, on a firm basis, as the only

barrier that could keep back the pressure of eastern barbarism, and secure to Europe a durable peace. However, in the hurry of his great anxieties, trusting too confidently to his good star, that hitherto shone brightly, the execution of so salutary a thought was delayed, and that delay proved to be the first nebulous spot in the progress of his career. Instead of stopping in Poland for winter-quarters, as the season was already advanced, during which time he might have elevated her to political importance, and thus strengthened her position, the Grand-army was conducted forward with all haste. From victory to reverses was an awful transition. Poland, more resembling a desert, a mere skeleton state, could not afford any material comfort or support to the friends in misfortune. From Moscow to Paris, with the exception of exhausted Poland, there was not a single throb of sympathy for the overwhelming vicissitude that befell so great a man.

With the beginning of Napoleon's difficulties the cherished expectations of the Poles lost hold of their minds. Again dark uncertainty and suspense overcast every patriotic speculation. But whilst the motley element joined and kept together by the influence of Napoleon, one after another began to drop off and turn upon him with all the might of their native animosities, the Poles, faithful to their engagement, and sincere in their attachment, stood alone by him to the last. This instance gave to Napoleon a better insight into the national character of Poland, whose claims, though admitted, were treated as yet

with careless judgment. It is only when great conceptions are frustrated that the superior mind falls upon the examination of the details of the evil causes of the failure. And Napoleon at St. Helena, when reviewing in his mind the magnitude of the catastrophe, acquired the strongest conviction, which he did not conceal, that one of his greatest political blunders was, to have neglected the reëstablishment of Poland. The judgment of so remarkable a genius should be an incontrovertible authority to our present statesmen, and as by a providential combination of circumstances France and England are now acting as the Allies against Russia, let them beware lest they should commit the same error, which was an object of regret to Napoleon, and which would be directly opposed to the best interests of civilisation.

After the fall of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna represented a singular mixture of ideas. It was a triumph of the old system of oppression and abuses, with a few fluttering rays of liberality. But the latter sentiment sprung up from the fear of the overgrowing preponderance of Russia, whose grasping greediness demanded the cession of Poland as a reward for the services rendered to coalition. France, England, and even Austria, were roused to a sense of danger—the latter power felt particular uneasiness at the prospect of having for so near a neighbor so monstrous and all-devouring a giant. France and England, from political considerations, took the attitude of opposition ; Austria, from the impulse of intuitive instinct, evinced a desire at any sacrifice to support it. The following

letter from Prince Metternich to Lord Castlereagh will satisfy my readers that the independence of Poland, even by the hostile principle, was considered as necessary for the tranquillity of Europe. It was written in 1814 :

'Of all the questions to be discussed at this Congress, the king would undoubtedly consider the affair of Poland as incomparably the most important to the interests of Europe, if there be any chance that this nation, so worthy of regard, by its antiquity, its valor, its misfortunes, and the services it has formerly rendered to Europe, might be restored to *complete independence*. The partition which destroyed its existence as a nation, was the prelude to—in some sense the cause of—the subsequent commotions to which Europe was exposed.'

Thus, Austria had sufficient honesty to avow sentiments in accordance with justice. It seems that the three powers, viz., France, England, and Austria, had strong reason to be dissatisfied with the spirit of Russia. Matters began to assume a serious aspect, and a rumor of a treaty circulated, which had for its object, as it was said, to check the ambition of the autocrat. At this time the sudden re-appearance of Napoleon from Elba threw into confusion the contemplated arrangement of the Congress of Vienna. The Czar Alexander knew how to take advantage of the general consternation of *the Holy Alliance*. He played well his part, and had his price for it. The possession of Poland could only secure his further co-operation in the coalition, and no sacrifice would have been deemed too great to prevent the loss of so powerful a partner. However, it was stipu-

lated that a small portion of Poland should be erected into an independent kingdom, whose crown was to be united with the Muscovite Czardom by its constitution, whilst the dismembered parts of its ancient domains were also to be governed by their national laws and usages. The battle of Waterloo cut the Gordian knot. The great Cæsar got St. Helena for his place of residence, and the arrangement of the Congress of Vienna became the law of Europe endorsed by the protection of the five powers, namely, England, France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia. In virtue of this very law, a fragment of Poland received the honorable appellation of an independent kingdom in July, 1815.

In arresting our attention upon this event, our first care should be to examine it in the spirit of the Polish annals. High as the estimation may be of the contracting parties in favor of their own work, in the judgment of a Pole it will never rise to any other character than as an act of the fourth partition of the country. In reality, the tribunal of universal history could not entertain a different opinion. The Congress of Vienna was a ratification of the crime of the three former dismemberments of Poland, with an honorable amendment that a fragment of the ruins should be still preserved; whether as a monument to occupy the attention of antiquarians, or as a commemoration of the guilt of her spoliators, would be difficult to determine. One fact, however, is certain, that it was a collective tribute to the aspirations of the Polish spirit. In the midst of arbitrary thrones, that fragment alone was to enjoy the

honor of an exceptional distinction, to live without manacles, to be a miniature of the grand picture of that Poland which, under the protection of justice, would have retained its magnificent dimensions. But, after all, the restitution of a wreck to its owners, though not under very pleasant conditions, was a welcome event, especially, as the management and the regulation of it was to be under the guardianship of freedom.

The new Constitution contained the most satisfactory provisions, calculated to inspire even the cautious with the most sanguine expectations. Its principal features were the following—

- I. That the Polish Kingdom shall never be united with the Russian Empire except by its charter.
- II. That personal liberty, and liberty of the press, are guaranteed.
- III. That every condemned individual shall suffer his punishment in the country.
- IV. That all offices shall be only given to Poles.
- V. That the Diet was to enact laws and vote supplies.
- VI. That the Judicial order is constitutionally independent, and the Judges are not removable.
- VII. That the punishment of confiscation is abolished, and shall never be revived.

To this collection must be added also the acceptance of the ancient fundamental law: *Neminem captivari permittemus nisi jure victum*. What a splendid foundation for starting a structure of regeneration and improvements on a colossal scale! No wonder that

to so tempting a bait the Poles attached themselves with confidence and enthusiasm. Their patriotic dreams revived. But it was merely a waking dream, that made them mistake a phantom for a reality. To the beautiful illusion succeeded the bitterness of disappointment. Every article of the said Constitution was unceremoniously thrown over board, or bent to the arbitrary will of the Grand Duke Constantine, whom Alexander, his brother, had appointed General-in-Chief of the Polish army. The liberty of the press was replaced by the most rigorous censorship, which interfered, also, with the public education, having under its arbitrary control the teachers and professors. Personal liberty, so solemnly guaranteed, was violated; the debasing system of espionage widely established; court martials assumed the functions of civil tribunals —in a word, abuses of the worst character multiplied, and maladministration stared in every direction.

These lawless practices, however, did not rear their monstrous head without a resolute and dignified struggle of legitimate opposition. The discontent of the Poles had already manifested itself in 1820, during the assembly of the Diet. Complaints were made to Alexander of the bad administration of the country; his promises and engagements to Poland were called to his recollection. But he, instead of putting a stop to the growing evil, testified his displeasure with the courageous Deputies, who had drawn up a memorial upon the matter, by subjecting them shortly afterwards to all manner of persecution.

The intentions of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg

were, in other respects, most perfidious. Conformably to the Congress of Vienna, Alexander had promised to preserve the national representation of the Lithuanian provinces, which had been declared a portion of the Russian Empire. From the first, he had abolished the Lithuanian Code, the publicity of the courts of justice, and labored to efface every trace of their ancient existence. The better to forward his designs, he introduced the Russian language into all the branches of the government, and dissolved many schools in consequence of the manifestation of a liberal spirit among the students. The administrative communications of the several provinces were destroyed, and the centre of operations established at St. Petersburg.

The Muscovite Government betook itself in earnest to destroy the national vitality, both in Lithuania and in the kingdom of Poland, by narrowing the means of public instruction. It hoped, by demoralising the nation, to reduce it to a complete forgetfulness of its former dignity. But the intellectual impulse of the nation got already too quick a motion to be easily stopped in its expansion. In this respect, history will have to pay a tribute of the purest admiration for the indefatigable exertions of the illustrious Prince Adam Czartoryski. Being possessed himself of extensive literary acquirements, he devoted his munificent patronage to learning, and sought the elevation of the national spirit through the channel of mental culture. For some time, public instruction in Lithuania was under the direction of the Prince. Under

his beneficial influence, schools sprang up and were provided with the ablest teachers and professors. If the mental activity of Poland, both in the sixteenth century and during the reign of Stanislaus Augustus, had established their right to the appellation of a golden era, the space of time from 1815 to 1830, assumed, in addition to the same honor, the high mission of embodying itself with every popular traditional idea or sentiment, in order to unite in one mighty tide the disjoined national life. The part which Prince Adam Czartoryski has taken in giving so national a direction to the mind of the country, will be better understood, as to its importance, if, instead of pouring the flood of my own grateful sentiments as a Pole, I confine myself to the evidence of the enemy himself, the High Commissioner both of Alexander and the late Nicholas, *the jailor and torturer* of Poland. The notorious Nowosielcoff, in his report, made a statement ‘that the denationalisation of Lithuania was retarded for a hundred years to come by the labors of Prince Adam Czartoryski.’

No higher or sweeter reward could have been assigned to the merits of the prince, than the very testimony of a foe conscious of the bitterness of truth. Thus, Poland began to rear an opposition of an intellectual character to the influence of Russia. The former personified the tendency of moral and mental improvements; the latter, the agglomeration of physical force and ignorance. The one felt the necessity of expansion and free action; the other wished to confine thought to the shape of sameness, that man

should be merely an automaton, without volition and aspiration. Two such natures diametrically opposed to each other, could not but try either to crush the opposition or to rend asunder the link of mutual connexion. Both pulled in a different direction. Russia, however, had the advantage of power, and with all its weight kept down the adverse element.

The silent struggle was going on with signs and tokens heralding the approach of an eventful epoch. At no period was a stronger desire evinced by the Czar to thwart the development of the mind—at no period had Poland so great a number of eminent philosophers and poets, as though they had the task of the prophets of old, to warn and to fortify her spirit. Yes, the momentous transition of a social crisis is generally consecrated by the thoughts and sentiments of some colossal genius. This glorious office was filled with a brilliant success by Adam Mickiewicz. He spoke as the incarnation of the sentiments of millions, and his voice had music for every soul. His first production, founded upon the collection of popular superstitious belief, at once novel in character and sublime in imagination, as if by a magnetic fluid, united all the severed parts of Poland into one harmonious feeling of admiration and enthusiasm. It became evident, that a nation torn asunder had in its state of mutilation one and the same pulsation. Hence, literature was a common tie—its progress, the guardian of nationality.

This truth being well known to the enemy, it

wanted only an opportunity for spitting its venom against it. A colorable pretext soon presented itself that gave the fullest latitude for the exercise of the most cruel severities. In 1824, an association existed among the students of the university and colleges at Wilno, under the appellation of 'Philaret'—having for its object, to cultivate the sentiment of fellowship, and to assist the poorer members, that they might be able, with ease and credit, to prosecute their studies. Although benevolence, and the exercise of the higher moral attributes, could only be laid to the charge of that association of the Polish youths, the Muscovite Government would have it that a terrible political mystification was to be discovered behind its curtain. An extraordinary commission was appointed, with unlimited powers, to carry on inquiries, with the heartless Nowosielcoff at its head. The horrid prisons were overcrowded, even with children of twelve or fourteen years old. A universal mourning overcast the land; whilst to Nowosielcoff it was a golden mine. His avarice could not be easily satisfied. Children of the wealthiest families were dragged into prison, for whose liberation heavy ransoms (in imitation of the Greek brigands) had to be paid. On the other hand, the Commissioners fenced themselves in their position by giving to the matter a fraudulent character.

The Czar rejoiced at being served so faithfully, on receiving report after report magnifying the traces of a would-be vast conspiracy. To give some semblance of veracity to their statements, the prisoners had to

endure the most barbarous treatment, calculated to extort feverish incoherent confessions that might bear the interpretation of a State crime. Thus, their diet consisted of salt herrings only, without a drop of water to quench the burning thirst. When, in a state of delirium, they were brought to the room of the Commissioners, a glass of water was placed before their eyes to heighten the excitement of tortured nature, and they were only allowed to alleviate their excruciating sufferings on condition that they should affix their signatures to documents, which they were led to believe represented the case to their advantage; but they invariably discovered, after recovering consciousness, that it was an act of self-accusation. The voice of their protestations was carefully stifled within the walls of their dungeons, and in this treacherous manner many had to suffer the punishment of exile in Siberia for imaginary crimes, or were condemned to serve for life as private soldiers in the Russian army.

Among the victims was Adam Mickiewicz. Moscow was the place of his banishment, where his superior intellect gained the interest and friendship of some influential personages. Through them he obtained the permission of travelling in Russia: and during his sojourn in the Crimea, he wrote a series of sonnets, unsurpassed in beauty, and commemorating the spots which struck forcibly his imagination. Besides these, he wrote about the same time a Poem, short in point of length, but characteristic in boldness of conception and in sublimity of sentiment. This was 'Faris,'

or Cavalier of the Desert, written in imitation of the Arabian poets. As it justly became a great favorite with the Poles, I insert it here as a specimen, though still inadequate to illustrate his mental powers.

FARIS.

Oh ! how happy the Arab who springs from his rock,
And who flies with his steed o'er the wide desert plain ;
When dull is the sound of his courser's hoof's shock,
Like the hiss of hot steel when they cool it again !
He cuts the dry ocean, he cuts the dry waves,
And he darts o'er the sands which his dolphin-breast braves,
And swifter and swifter he skims like the wind,
Leaving all, save the dust of his passage, behind.

Black is my steed as a cloud of rain,
There's a star of white on his brow ;
The free gales play with his feathery mane,
And lightnings gleam round his feet of snow.
Dash on, my white-footed horse !
Forests and mountains, make way for my course !

A palm tree wooes me to its shade,
Where its rich fruits hang o'er my head ;
Yet swiftly on ! —the palm tree hides
Its crest, and blushingly derides
The rashness of my wandering path.

The rocky guardians of the clime
Frown on me, as they menaced death ;
While echoing still in measured time
The gallop of my courser's hoof,
They hoarsely bid me stand aloof.

'Where goest thou, madman ? where no shade
Of tree or tent shall screen thy head :
The tent that spreads there is the sky :
The rocks alone there sleeping lie—
The only strangers are the stars,
Who travel in their ruddy cars
Towards that land of mystery.'

Still on—still on !—I turn my eyes,
The cliffs no longer mock the skies ;
The peaks shrink back, and hide their brow
Each other's lofty heads below.
A vulture has heard their threats, and he flies
 To make me his prisoner,
Thrice has his dark wings flapp'd by my eyes,
 As he cleaves the sultry air.

'I snuff up the smell of a corse from afar—
Whither goest thou, wild steed ? whither fliest cavalier ?
Does the warrior seek for the pathways of war ?
 Does the wild steed seek for pasture here ?
The wind of the desert here battles alone—
None but serpents inhabit the wilderness-stone—
None but skeletons slumber upon the ground,
And we, vultures, in solitude hover around.'

He shriek'd, and stretch'd his claws of jet—
And thrice our dark eyes met—
And which of us flew away ?
'Twas the vulture that flew away.

Still on—still on !—I turned my eyes,
The vulture vanished in the skies,
Like some small bird—and, smaller yet—
A butterfly—a gnat.

Dash on, my white-footed horse !
Rocks, vultures, give way to my course !
A cloud has heard his threats, and he flies
 On his pearly wings through the firmament :
Would he could dart through the realm of the skies,
 As my courser darts o'er the desert's extent !
But he hangs o'er my head, and the voice of the gale
Bears me its threats and its sorrowful wail.

'Where goest thou, madman ? where the heat
 Shall parch thy breast, and parch thy tongue—
No kindly drop thy lip to greet,
 No stream to glad thee with its song ;
No evening dew shall fall to thee,
 The hot wind drinks it too greedily.'

Vain was the voice of the pale cloud sighing,
 Still on, o'er the desert plain :
The cloud stood still, on a bold peak lying,
 And never rose again.

For when I thither turn'd my head,
 It lingered in the horizon's shade.
And I traced in its colors the thoughts of the cloud
 As it redden'd with rage, and grew yellow with hate,
Till it lividly sank like a corpse in a shroud,
 Where the dark frowning rocks on its obsequies wait.

Dash on my white-footed horse !
Clouds, vultures, give way to my course !
I look'd around me, like the sun,
 And saw that I was all alone.
Here nature never yet was woke,
 No mortal step her sleep has broke ;

The elements, too, slumber here,
As beasts upon some desert isle
Have never learnt to flee in fear
From man's unknown alluring guile.

Great Allah ! I am not alone !
I'm not the first, the only one ;
I see a troop before me stand—
Is it some merchant's caravan ?
Or is it the Bedouin's robber band
That lurks in the traveller's van ?

The horsemen are pallid, and frightfully white
Are the coursers which stand all array'd for the flight.
I approach, but they wake not—
I speak, but they speak not—
Just God ! they are corses all,
And the wind-lifted sand was their pall.
On the skeleton steed sits the skeleton man,
Through their eye-balls and jaws as the idle sand ran
It told the sad fate of the last caravan :
And still it whispered in mine ear—
'Stay ! whither goest thou ? madman—where ?
Lo ! where the sultry storms prepare !'

Still on, still on, I come, I come—
Corpses and storms, make room !
A hurricane was marching o'er
The agitated desert shore ;
Amazed, he sees me from afar—
He stops, and turns his dusty car :—
'Young puny breeze, say, what art thou,
To brave the terrors of my brow ?'

And he marched in my track like a fortress in motion ;
Though mortal, I stood like a rock ;
And he stamped on the sand, which arose in commotion,
Till Arabia was torn by the shock.
And, as a vulture grasps his prey,
He seized me, whilst his burning wing
Flapped o'er me with a scorching ray.
He casts me as an idle thing
From air to earth, from earth to air,
And ruddily his breathings glare.

I wrenched his mighty arms in twain,
And wrestled with the hurricane.
I tore his frame—I gnashed the sand—
I held him in my hand.

He towered above me, and then fell
To earth again—his head sank down ;
And sinking, 'twas as if a town
Rose up—a sandy citadel.
Then, then I breathed, and raised my eyes
Toward the mansions of the skies—
Gazing on high right haughtily ;
For the stars looked down on none save me.

Oh ! how freely my bosom expands in this air ;
How largely, how widely, how fully I live !
As the gales of Arabia their rich perfumes bear,
How sweet are the feelings of breathing they give.
Oh ! how freely my eyes stretch themselves in the distance,
Growing strong as they gaze on immensity's waste ;
How I raise up my arms in the pride of existence,
As if in those arms the wide world was embraced !

While my thoughts to the dome of yon firmament bound.
And I vision out regions far brighter than this ;
As the bee when he stings leaves the sting in the wound,
So my thoughts leave my soul in those regions of bliss.

A nation so rich in literature, with its historical recollections and high aspirations, could not but feel keenly the humiliation to which it was reduced. The persecution of the Polish youths gave a new impetus to the exertions of the patriotic secret societies which for some time previous to this had already existed. Their labors and hopes met with unexpected encouragement from a phenomenon which, though it was nipped in its bud, still augured a better future to the Muscovites themselves.

Towards the latter end of the reign of Alexander, liberal ideas began to scatter a few seeds even on the soil of Russia, which had hitherto seemed to be arid and sterile of liberty. A small knot of the intelligent and generous Russians conceived the idea of overthrowing the power of the Autocrat. Their conspiracy had its widely-spread ramifications principally in the army. With cautious steps they gradually found a way of communication with the Poles. Though opportunity was promising, though both had one and the same object in view (for the Russian patriots unanimously agreed to the reëstablishment of Poland as an independent State), still, either from national antipathies, or for want of a more intimate acquaintance between the leaders, no serious understanding existed that could give a proper direction to the com-

mon plan. Procrastination and vacillation constituted a feeble bond in the unity of their action.

In the meantime, a rumor was afloat that the Government had already a clue to the whole plot, and it produced great consternation among all parties. Whilst this occurred, tidings arrived of the sudden death of Alexander at Taganrog, in December, 1825. It was a momentous combination of circumstances, prompting the conspirators to take an immediate step for carrying out their views. St. Petersburg and other places in Russia made their first essay on behalf of liberty. It did not prove a failure, however, until the streets of St. Petersburg were streaming with blood. Thus Nicholas mounted his throne upon the corpses of thousands of his subjects. He had inaugurated his reign with executions, and filling the mines of Siberia with a number of victims.

Although the Poles did not compromise themselves by open opposition, yet a suspicion of connivance fell upon some of them, and it led to arrests so numerous, that several convents and palaces were appropriated for the purpose of receiving the state prisoners. The persons detained were accused of high treason. According to the Constitution, a High National Court, composed of all the Members of the Senate, should have been instituted; but the Emperor Nicholas showed early the greatest dislike to the constitutional course, and he preferred naming an extraordinary Committee of Inquisition, composed chiefly of Russians. Again, in contravention of the charter, which expressly stated, 'that no person can be punished but by virtue of

existing laws, and of a sentence pronounced by competent magistrates,' the accused were arrested without any legal forms, thrust into little cells, and experienced barbarous treatment, from the beginning of 1826 to 1828.

However, there are limits, which even arbitrary power considers it prudent apparently to respect. Consequently, the Autocrat, in order to bring to a termination the anguish of suspense and national excitement, decided to refer the case to the High National Court. Glory be to the senators, who, in the result, gave a formal denial to the criminal hopes of the Autocrat, and thus this illustrious body maintained its own honor and that of the nation. The Court set aside the inquisition of the infamous Committee, and declared unanimously, with the exception of only one voice—that of the servile General Vincent Krasinski—that there were no grounds of proceedings against the accused for state crimes. Neither the Emperor Nicholas, nor his brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, anticipated such a defeat. The Grand Duke, in his anger, immediately promulgated an ordinance, prohibiting the Court from publishing its decision until further orders.

Thus were the accused subject to the punishment after a sentence of their acquittal, and the independence of the judiciary order trampled upon. Moreover, the High Court received a severe reprimand from the Autocrat for having fulfilled its duty, and its members were under a sort of moral confinement, as they had orders not to absent themselves

from Warsaw until the pleasure of their royal master was known upon the case.

The interest and sympathy of the whole nation having been engaged in the trial, it felt the deepest indignation at the conduct of the executive power. General discontent scattered new seeds of impatience, that could not bear the yoke gradually tightening round them. This sentiment was strengthened and heightened by the noble example of that venerable body, the Senate, who made a fearless remonstrance, in a dignified protest against the illegality of the Grand Duke Constantine's interference, and the injustice of the imperial censure cast upon them.

The recollection of this trial will occupy a brilliant page in the Polish annals, and it will engrave upon the hearts of grateful posterity the names of Prince Adam Czartoryski, Kochanowski, and Bninski, who constituted a commission, charged with the responsible task of drawing up the said protestation, which, as a document, represents honorably the spirit of a nation impressed with the value of freedom and independence. That the Czar had early decided in his mind to annihilate the constitutional forms, it soon became manifest to the Polish nation, from the moment when, bowing to the decision of the High Court, he, by his own authority, and in opposition to its verdict, made an exception of Colonel Krzyzanowski, whom he ordered to be sent to Siberia, where the martyr-patriot ended his sorrowful days.

This partial triumph of the High Court made the

country catch the first gleam of the fatal rule which it had to endure. It betook itself earnestly and spontaneously to devise the best means of opposition, in anticipation of a great crisis. Men of all ranks and professions were like one mighty presentiment, pointing out the necessity of a struggle for the preservation of national life ; whilst Nicholas little dreamt that his career of usurpation could experience a check. By acts of oppression and bold tyranny, he indulged himself in the hope of intimidating the lingering speculations of patriotic ideology. But in the midst of his vast plans of ambition, the memorable 29th of November, in 1830, inflicted upon his might a wound which time did not heal. The honor belongs to the youths of the military school for having given the signal, and taken the first initiative step, of a national revolution ; and the memory of their leader, Peter Wysocki, will be rewarded by immortal veneration.

The event showed to the astonished world what a people can perform, although inferior in number, when it combats for its rights and liberty. There is nothing so interesting as the inspired attitude of a nation rising in defence of its independence. The most vivid picture of imagination would be still a faint representation of the generous enthusiasm and general emulation in the acts of sacrifices and heroism. It is not my intention to enter into the details of that glorious and memorable struggle, as, in justice to its importance, the subject should be considered with careful attention and dispassioned mind. Again, the matter would

be so ample as to require a separate volume. However, my readers will recognise in this new effort of the Poles to shake off foreign tyranny, the continuity of the same idea and sentiment, the influence of which, throughout their political career, history had to notice and point emphatically out, as having been the moving spring of their social tendency and development—namely, the sentiment and idea of freedom. On that very account, the cause of Poland found a lively echo in the quick, instinctive understanding of all nations, whose sympathy it has the satisfaction of possessing.

On the other hand, history will have also to grieve and to inveigh against the apathy shown and maintained by the Governments of Europe during the whole time of the contest. It is unaccountable that a period of ten months of heroic resistance, on the part of the Poles, was not sufficient to awaken the other states to the sense of their duty on behalf of a sound policy. A false and treacherous spirit had direction of their counsels. There is no need of arguments to sustain this accusation. The sole fact that Louis Philippe, who, in August, 1831, when courting popularity, announced, with his own lips, at the review of the National Guards, ‘that Polish nationality shall not perish.’ The following month in the same year, he was the first to intimate to the Chambers, through his Minister Sebastiani, in the laconic manner savoring more of inward satisfaction than sympathy, ‘that the imperial guards of Russia entered Warsaw, and order reigned in the city.’

These words will be inscribed as an epitaph to the memory of Louis Philippe, commemorating characteristically his duplicity and perfidy.

The fall of Poland, however, was accompanied with extraordinary signs of her uninterrupted mission. The fields of battle deserted, were guarded only by the scattered mounds of the dead; and in these vast tombs the Poles and the Russians mixed together, and, for the first time, concluded a sincere and eternal peace. The dungeons that were empty during the months of the struggle were again crowded with inmates guilty of no other crime but the love of their country. The road to Siberia resumed unusual activity, and the kibitka (a sort of waggon used for the conveyance of prisoners), reappeared, hurrying one after another, charged with victims of merciless tyranny. Deep mourning, anguish, and despair took possession of almost every hearth.

While such melancholy changes were taking place in Poland, a great number of her sons, like pilgrims, sought shelter in a foreign land, and met with the warmest reception. The people of France, Switzerland, and Great Britain, and some parts of Germany, paid a tribute of sympathy to them, not so much because they were unfortunate, as that they represented the principle of justice.

In this contrast of conduct and judgment exercised with regard to Poland by different parties contemporaneously, her merit is summed up. The vindictiveness of the one and the generosity of the other are the favorable evidences, both estab-

lishing her rights and claims. The former stands a witness to her sufferings and martyrdom ; the latter as a tribunal of nations displayed its functions and opinions by the manifestation of its moral sentiments. In both positions the Poles did not abandon their duty. Those under the weight of oppression know how to endure with dignity their trials, and thus enable them, even in their helpless condition, to disturb the composure and self-confidence of the Czar ; and the expatriated have not ceased lifting their voice of warning against the danger with which Europe was and still is threatened by the aggressive policy of Russia. Yet year after year has rolled away in sorrow and disappointment. The Western Powers, as if fascinated by the swoop of that greedy two-headed monster whose outstretched wings had so long darkened the sky, listlessly gazed upon its mutilated prey.

That want of active interest in the cause of justice was an encouragement to the Emperor Nicholas to carry on boldly the work of destruction. He seemingly had in his mind the prophecy of Napoleon the Great, uttered at St. Helena, ‘that if ever Russia succeeds in absorbing Poland, or in conciliating the Poles, then she would become the master of the world.’ The Autocrat lost no time in trying the experiment. His first care was to incorporate Poland with the Russian Empire, to which measure no opposition was offered on the part of other States, though it was in contravention of the treaty of Vienna, which still should have guarded the interests of Europe. His

next step was, not to conciliate, but to break the national vitality of the Polish spirit, or to exterminate it.

Here was his principal blunder. A reign of terror always recoils upon itself. It is haunted by the phantoms of its victims, and stands in awe and dread of vengeance suspended over its head. Hence, as long as there was a single Pole, Nicholas had no peace, no confidence, and no free action in his plans. He thought, however, that a favorable opportunity presented itself for the execution of the latter part of Napoleon's prophecy.

My readers are already acquainted with the story of 'the sick man.' But this time the cunning of Nicholas excited suspicion, and his skill as *a physician* was repudiated. It gave rise to a new political phenomenon, heralding to civilisation and humanity the happiest anticipations. The alliance of France and England grew rapidly into a firm bond of one and the same aspirations. Hope and justice associated themselves with so welcome an event. But if earnestness of sentiment and thought constitute a link of that alliance, no doubt can be entertained that the antagonistic principle of Russia, so hostile to the progress of civilisation and freedom, will be effectually crippled.

This object, however, will never be gained without the reëstablishment of Poland as an independent State. As a Pole, I feel a certain reserve in pressing forward my own views upon the subject, lest my arguments may be mistaken for partiality. Having given in

this small volume a sketch of the political and intellectual development of Poland, my readers will be enabled themselves to pronounce a judgment whether her past, and the tendency of her spirit, render the existence of her independent agency necessary, as the only material guarantee of a future durable peace, in conjunction with the progress of all social improvements.

Conclusion.

THERE is, however, ere I conclude this work, one point to which I would wish to allude, more from a desire to show the under-current efforts of the Muscovite agency in disseminating misrepresentations, in order to mislead or stagger the judgment of the public, than from any importance of its own that it may possess.

By some unaccountable influence, a strange idea has been set afloat, 'that no Poles were to be found in Poland; that her nationality existed only in the minds of the exiles.' Although, as an exile myself, I may well feel proud of so high a compliment paid as a truthful acknowledgment of the high character of our mission, yet I cannot help bestowing a piteous smile upon the credulity with which some grasped at so ridiculous and extravagant a suggestion.

'No more Poles in Poland'! What! is her spirit dead! and a horde of two hundred thousand Muscovites are still obliged to watch her inanimate corpse? Do they keep this vigilance in honor of the mighty

dead? Do they fear to move a step away, lest by some supernatural interference their murdered victim should be called to life again? In that respect the Muscovite faith is stronger than the hopes and wishes even of some of our kind friends in this country. They firmly believe in the resurrection of Poland, and relax not in the cruelty with which they constantly treat her lingering life and mutilated limb. The long list of persecutions, vying with each other in the refinement of malignity, attest that, though her body is prostrate, her spirit has survived, which oppression cannot subdue nor strangle in the chains of dungeons. It manifests itself on every occasion with such distinct tenacity of its national character, that it should satisfy the most prejudiced minds as to the impossibility of its ever absorbing its individuality in unity with the Muscovites, which is only effected and continued by violence and force.

In evidence of this statement, a recent occurrence that took place on the British shores may be adduced by way of example. Among the large number of prisoners conveyed from Bomarsund to England, there were four hundred Poles, all private soldiers, and, as such, they were the very representatives of the primitive sentiments of the Polish people. It must be added that some of them had seen more than twenty years of service in the Russian army, and one would have supposed that the habits acquired during the service, and the length of time of separation from their native land, would, in a great measure, have modified the spirit, or left merely a faint trace

of it in a sigh of regret caused by the recollection lingering in the memory. Such was not the case. No sooner did they find themselves lodged in the prison assigned to them in Devonport, than they forwarded a memorial to the Admiralty of their own accord (for all communication with the Polish exiles was in the beginning after their arrival strictly forbidden), soliciting the British Government that they might be permitted to fight under the British flag against the Russians, as being their common enemy.

This step was a spontaneous emanation of the pure Polish spirit. Its true heroism, its uncommon grandeur, will at once present themselves to the mind of my readers, when their attention is drawn to the appalling danger, of which they had perfect knowledge, and they had an equal resolution to face it. According to the usages and laws of war, an English, French, Turkish, or Sardinian, or even the hired German and Swiss, have a right to expect an honorable treatment at the hands of the Russians. But the die of a Pole is cast—for him to become a prisoner would be worse than death—neither the voice of mercy nor hope would ever reach his ears—the prospect of a slow torturous existence is all that is left to him to expect. And yet this terrible fate reserved for the Poles that may fall into the hands of the Russians in the present war, did not chill the enthusiasm which was kindled in them by the first opportunity that presented itself to enable them to fight against the oppressor of their country. Is this not the result of the life of their national spirit? Is this not the sentiment of attachment and devotedness to the

idea of their national independence? Thus, the four hundred prisoners brought from Bomarsund are a striking evidence of the vitality of Polish Individuality; and now they have the happiness of being a part of a Polish corps, which is in the progress of formation under the command of General Count Wladyslaw Zamoyski.

Another instance has just come to my knowledge, gathered from the official report of the officer commanding the first battalion of Polish infantry—an instance of heroic sublimity. I copy it from the said report, bearing the date of the 9th of December, 1855, written at Scutari: ‘Lieutenant Kosielowski forwards weekly detachments of volunteers from a dépôt of prisoners belonging to the French (of course the volunteers are all Poles). Among them a youth of sixteen years old, of the name of Rynkowiak, attracts particular attention. His flight from Oczakow is not only characteristic, but also bears a witness to his uncommon patriotism. Unmindful and fearless of the danger that the aspect of a rough sea would have created in a mind of an ordinary cast, Rynkowiak, as if preoccupied solely with the idea of being successful in his desertion from the ranks of the foe of his native land, did not hesitate a moment, but threw himself into the arms of the agitated billows—succeeded in securing a piece of wood—and, resting on such a frail support, he struggled with the threatening surges, and was fortunate in reaching Kinburn, a distance of four miles.’

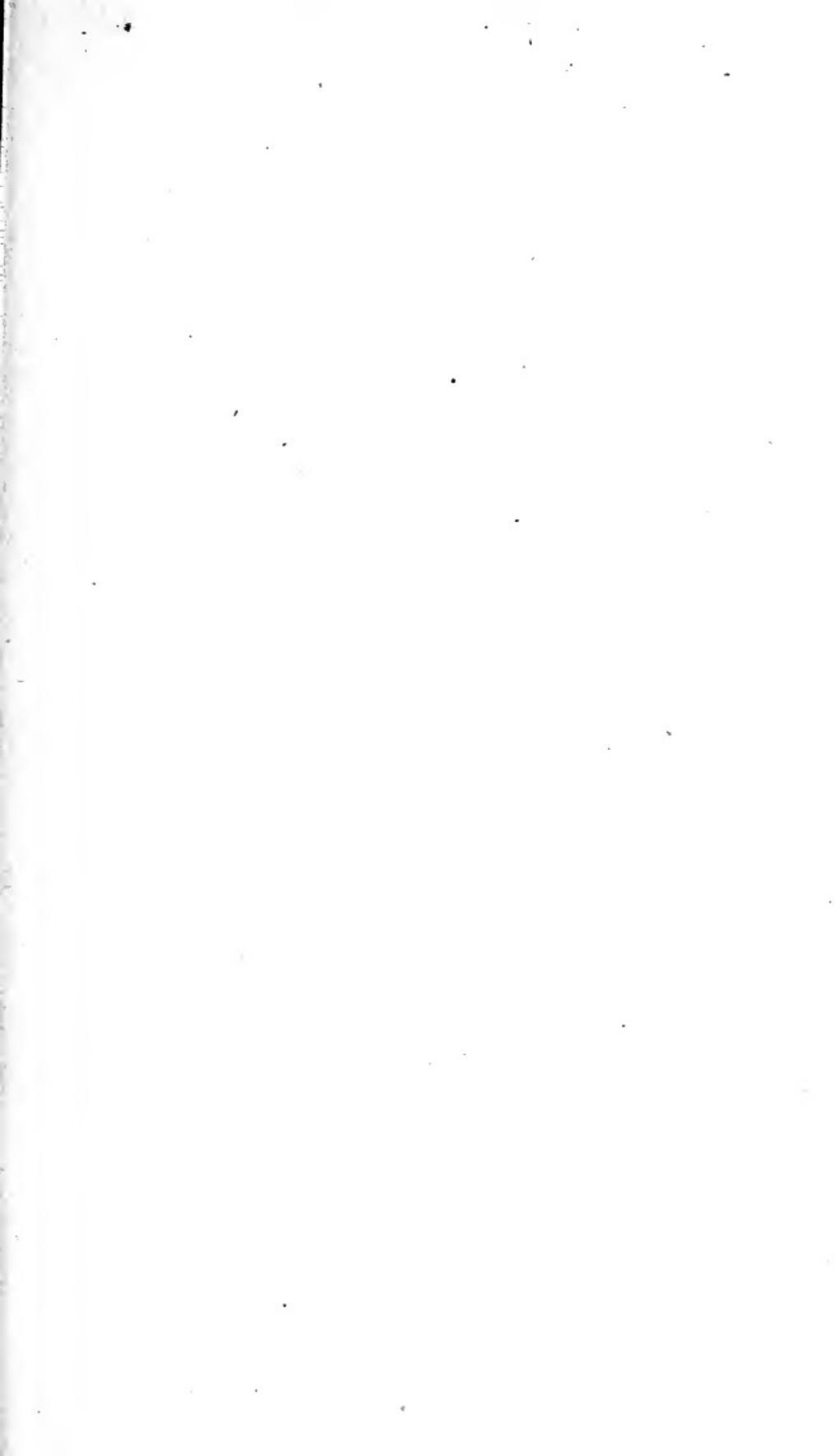
Now, I would ask my readers, did Rynkowiak desert

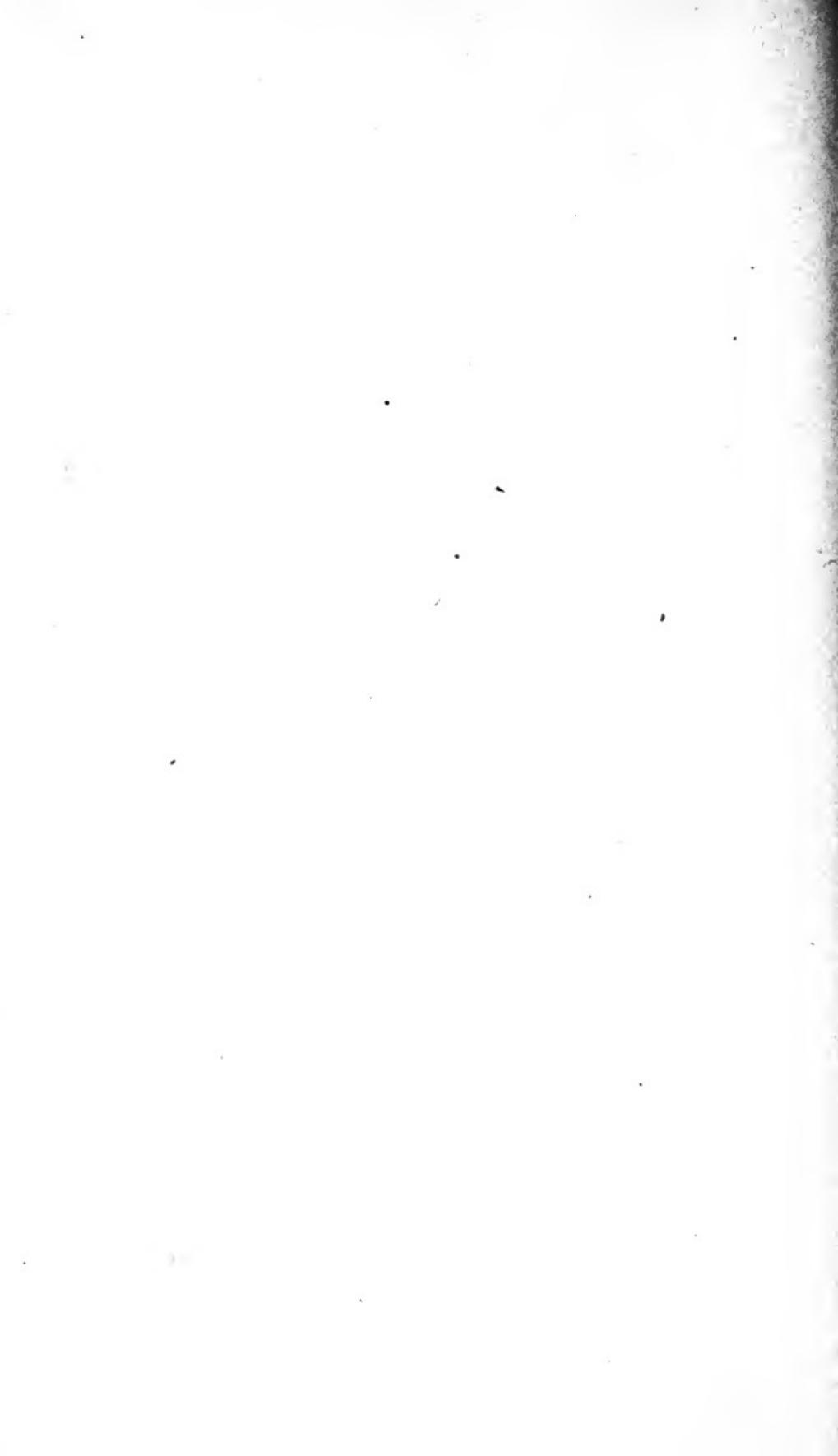
the Russian ranks with the intention of eluding the hardships of a soldier, or the dangers of war? No; for he is again a soldier—but a Polish soldier—as if in that change of his position the very augmentation of the danger attached to it became to him a charm.

These illustrations of the existence of the Polish spirit are sufficient to authorise every person to speak with confidence in favor of the necessity of calling upon the Poles, as a distinct national element, to take part in the struggle against Russia. If their alacrity to join the Allies is so strongly manifested in the absence of any immediate hope as to the restoration of their country, what would it be if Great Britain and France made a declaration that the reëstablishment of Poland is one of the conditions of future peace! That condition, alone, would take away from Russia the means and power of ever disturbing the repose of Europe. Otherwise, although humiliated and curtailed in its possessions on the Black sea, Russia will be still a monster, whose talons, though somewhat blunted, will retain sufficient power and sufficient sharpness to become again the scourge of the world.



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